

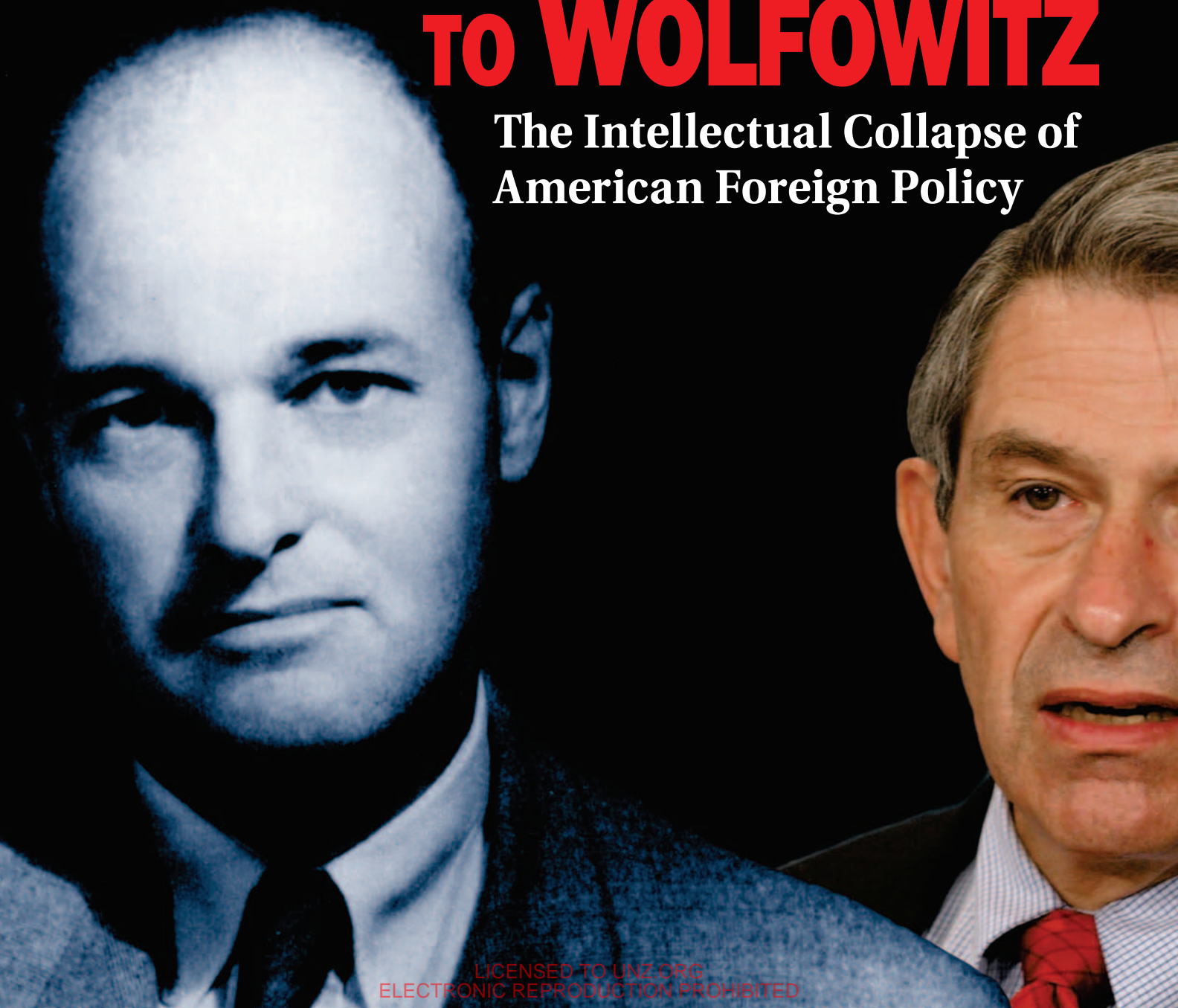
CRISIS AT COLUMBIA ■ THE CASE FOR MASS TRANSIT

JUNE 6, 2005

# The American Conservative

## FROM KENNAN TO WOLFOWITZ

The Intellectual Collapse of  
American Foreign Policy



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## THE REAL COHN

In "The Real McCarthy" (April 25), Ralph de Toledano states that Sen. Joseph McCarthy was "brought down" by lies (unspecified) he made to cover up for Roy Cohn. He states that Cohn was "the most reprehensible individual I have ever known personally." As a friend of Senator McCarthy and Roy Cohn for many years, I am compelled to refute these scurrilous comments.

Toledano's opinion of Cohn is exactly the opposite of the opinion held by Senator and Jean McCarthy, J. Edgar Hoover, Cardinal Francis Spellman, and the approximately 800 people who attended a memorial in his honor at Town Hall, New York City. His close friends included many religious; law-enforcement personnel such as the top officials of the FBI; and prominent members of the media, e.g., William Safire. He was godfather to five children, an indication of the respect in which he was held by those who really knew him.

Toledano states that he and other friends "turned away" from Senator McCarthy when he "was a sick and despairing man." The "reprehensible" Roy Cohn did not "turn away." He remained his close friend and unfailingly defended McCarthy at every opportunity.

Senator McCarthy and Roy Cohn were as one in their opposition to communism. As a result they both suffered great injustices in defense of their country. Every senator, congressman, and counsel who effectively investigated communism was maliciously and relentlessly castigated in the media and academia. Toledano should know better than to blame Cohn for bringing down Joe McCarthy.

ALLAN SCHNEIDER  
*Spring Valley, N.Y.*

### **Ralph de Toledano replies:**

In defending the indefensible and attacking my "scurrilous" appraisal of Roy Cohn, Allan Schneider plays hob

with the record. He may resent my comments, but I was there, as a friend of Senator McCarthy and as a newsman covering in depth the so-called McCarthy era. Since then, most of McCarthy's strongest advocates have been in agreement that Cohn did more harm to the senator than his enemies in the media and the Democratic Party.

Mr. Schneider argues that my opinion of Cohn is "exactly the opposite" of that allegedly held by others, including Jean McCarthy, Joe's wife. Jean was my friend and that friendship continued after Joe's death. Privately, she was convinced that Roy was a pernicious influence on Joe. J. Edgar Hoover did not confide in me, but never in my relations with the FBI was there a word of approbation from the bureau for Roy—in fact, the opposite.

I did "turn away" from McCarthy politically—much because of Roy—but not personally. After his death, Jean McCarthy tried to get me to write a book about her husband. She was convinced that Roy, always a Democrat, was largely responsible for urging Joe to extend the "20 years of treason" to include the Eisenhower administration, thereby launching a war not only with the White House but with his Republican colleagues in the Senate—an act of political suicide.

Allan Schneider's loyalty is to Roy Cohn. Mine is to the record.

## COMPASSIONATE CONSERVATIVE

Thank you for printing Matthew Scully's "Fear Factories" (May 23). When friends learn that I don't eat animals or animal products, they often look at me like I'm from another planet. But once I learned what goes on in the factory farms and slaughterhouses, I chose to eliminate my complicity with these egregious industries. Some consider my vegan diet to be "radical," but I think what is truly

extreme is the institutionalized cruelty inflicted upon billions of animals simply to save a few pennies.

Don't believe what you've been told by the meat industry and the media. Vegetarians, vegans, and animal activists are not all left-wing communist abortionists. Some of us are compassionate conservatives who simply believe that extending kindness to animals makes for better human beings.

STEWART W. DAVID  
*Asheville, N.C.*

## AS ST. FRANCIS SAID ...

I just finished reading your article by Matthew Scully and was moved to tears by this thoughtful and profound piece of journalism. Conservatives who practice good, sound ethics should feel the inherent wrong in cruelty to God's creatures most acutely. It is our responsibility as the dominant species to be good stewards to those weaker than us who require our protection.

Saint Francis of Assisi said it best: "If you have men who will exclude any of God's creatures from the shelter of compassion and pity, you will have men who will deal likewise with their fellow men."

This letter is coming from a liberal, and this article made me realize that there is still hope that we can find common ground and work together to address some ethical dilemmas. Conservatives and liberals alike should care about the fates of others, whether the others are human or animal.

TINA SANTUCCI  
*via e-mail*

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[BUDGET]

## W'S GREAT SOCIETY

It used to be simple: you voted Republican if you wanted less government and pulled the lever for Democrats if you were looking for a handout from Washington. But reality has a way of dispelling comforting fiscal platitudes. According to a study by the Cato Institute, George W. Bush has presided over the biggest inflation-adjusted increase in federal spending since Lyndon Johnson tried to build his Great Society with our tax dollars.

That's right, Bush managed to outspend Bill Clinton. The federal budget's share of the economy grew from 18.5 percent when Clinton left office to 20.3 percent four years later. Total government expenditures rose 33 percent during Bush's first term. Even if you exclude defense and homeland security, Bush is still the biggest-spending president in 30 years, and his reputedly tight-fisted fiscal 2006 budget proposal—which doesn't leave a single cabinet-level agency smaller than when he took office and is likely to be ignored by Congress—does not change his ranking.

Speaking of Congress, Cato reports that spending on the 101 largest programs Gingrich's revolutionaries vowed to eliminate when they rode into town in 1995 has risen by 27 percent. Congress has also spent \$91 billion more than Bush requested on domestic programs. The president's veto pen conveniently went missing each time. Wanted: a fiscally conservative party in Washington.

[ALLIES]

## LIES & THE LYING LIARS

On the morning of July 23, 2002—eight months before the invasion of Iraq—British Prime Minister Tony Blair plotted a war. He would later tell his country, "We have not got to the stage of military action ... we have not yet reached the point of decision." He lied. Earlier this month the *Times* of London published

the secret minutes of Blair's July 23 war council, which tell the real story—how Blair and President Bush had already set themselves on war with Iraq.

Blair's advisors at the meeting, including his foreign secretary, Jack Straw, and his attorney general, Lord Goldsmith, warned him that (in Straw's words), "Saddam was not threatening his neighbours, and his WMD capability was less than that of Libya, North Korea or Iran." In Goldsmith's opinion, a war for regime change would be illegal under international law.

But the decision was already made. "When the prime minister discussed Iraq with President Bush at Crawford in April [2002]," the documents report, "he said that the UK would support military action to bring about regime change." And that, according to another participant at Blair's conclave, MI6 chief Richard Dearlove, was just what Bush had in mind: "Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD," he said in the report.

Blair has now won a third term, albeit with a greatly reduced parliamentary majority—the Tories, themselves committed to support the war, provided the British public with little alternative on the election's top issue. We suspect, however, that British voters will not soon forget the duplicity that cooked up the Iraq War—and Americans should not forget it either.

[NEOCONS]

## PIPES'S INQUISITION

A good place to trace the intellectual decline of neoconservatism is the career of Daniel Pipes, the principal Islamic scholar among the neocons. Pipes frequently emphasizes the distinction between "Islamism"—a militant, viciously anti-American, al-Qaeda-type ideology—and the broader Muslim religion. It is of course an important distinction,

as crucial as one made in the last century between "communist" and "social democrat."

But Pipes seems to have forgotten about it or at least is now using it in a deliberately false way. His website recently posted an item—"Is Grover Norquist an Islamist?"—designed to smear the well-known Republican advocate of lower taxes. Norquist committed what Pipes apparently considers a grave crime: earlier this month he married, in an eclectic wedding presided over by Rabbi Daniel Lapin, a Palestinian woman named Samah Alrayyes. In response to a reporter's question about whether he had converted to his bride's Muslim faith, he said it was a personal matter.

So Pipes shifted into high defamation gear. Norquist, he wrote, has ties to several "Islamist" groups. He once gave a speech at the Council on American Islamic Relations. He helped found the Islamic Free Market Institute, a group run by a well connected Washingtonian of Palestinian ancestry, Khaled Saffuri. A *TAC* editor spoke there earlier this year, sandwiched on the program between Sen. George Allen and Newt Gingrich, and none had the slightest reason to think they were involved in an "Islamist" project. What Saffuri surely does oppose is Israel's continued occupation of the land that will one day be a Palestinian state. That, one would surmise, is what prompts Pipes to try to smear the group and by association Grover Norquist.

The distinction between extremist Muslims who want to kill Americans and anyone of Palestinian ancestry who wants an opportunity for national self-determination is a really obvious one. To see the dean of neocon Mideast experts try consciously to blur this distinction and to turn the useful concept of "Islamist" into a weapon to bludgeon people who might favor a Palestinian state should tell us all we need to know about the agenda of today's neoconservatism.

[NUMBERS]

## LOSING THE COUNTRY

The Iraq War's popularity continues to plummet while nothing resembling an exit strategy has yet emerged. A majority of Americans has lost faith in this exercise—57 percent of respondents to a May 3 CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll said that the war was not worth it. Fifty-six percent characterized the continuing conflict as going “badly” for the United States. Forty-nine percent say sending troops to Iraq in the first place was a mistake.

With Saddam Hussein captured, the myth of WMD debunked, and Iraq having held free elections, Americans are rightly wondering what more there is to be accomplished that justifies the ongoing loss of American lives—and they're starting to conclude that what has already been achieved has come at too high a cost.

[HISTORY]

## WW2 REVISITED (AGAIN)

With George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin commemorating the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, the Good War is once again in the news and opinion pages. Of course, it is always in the news as its consequences—the Holocaust, the division of Europe, decolonization, the existence of the state of Israel—are still very much a part of contemporary politics. Any attentive newspaper reader knows that the postwar era has not yet ended.

It was, as Winston Churchill said, an unnecessary war in the sense that if Europe had attended earlier to Hitler's rise, it could have done so without a war that nearly exhausted European civilization. If France had responded militarily to Hitler sending troops into the Rhineland in 1936, the German generals would have retreated and in all likelihood Hitler would have been toppled. If the West had overthrown Hitler by force

in 1933, as the Polish leader Marshal Pilsudski urged, 50 million lives could have been spared. Posterity would never have known what miseries Europe missed. A nation can be too afraid of war, as France and Britain were in the 1930s. Or it can be too eager for it, too heedless of the many negative consequences—as the Bush administration is today. Finding a sensible medium is the true mark of statesmanship.

Looking at the dreadful consequences of World War II, speculative minds might conclude, as Taki does in his column in this issue, that appeasement of the Nazis should have been pursued more systematically. Knowing what we do about Hitler, we have no reason to think that appeasement would have worked. Far better if Nazism had been throttled sooner, in 1933 or 1936. But the West had no alternative but to throttle it eventually. Despite the war's enormous costs, the postwar era has been a time of vitality and creativity for the West—and it could not have been so if Nazism had survived and thrived in the center of Europe.

There is something enervating about these debates, as if every few years the participants drag out their set pieces, hoping to use the controversy to advance other agendas. Thus World War II is commemorated—in Bush's case, to advance the idea that America at war is a good thing, while America First nostalgics, in perpetual need to scratch an old wound, point to the satellitization of Eastern Europe and say the war didn't solve anything. In this case the nostalgics are wrong. The war established that the democratic West was a foe of Nazi totalitarianism and was able to defeat it, thus confirming something crucial about our own identity. Over the next 45 years, the West further demonstrated that it could successfully defeat another totalitarianism. Both victories are well worth celebrating. ■

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# Get Out of Putin's Face

“The greatest geostrategic disaster of the 20th century,” Vladimir Putin has called the collapse of the Soviet Empire. His statement shook Western elites, for we see

that collapse as miraculous deliverance, the welcome death of an evil empire built on the denial of God-given rights, an empire with the blood of scores of millions of innocents on its hands.

As President Bush said in Riga, Central and Eastern Europe were not liberated in 1945 by the Red Army. They were liberated in 1989 by the collapse of Soviet Communism:

V-E Day marked the end of fascism, but it did not end oppression. The agreement at Yalta followed in the unjust tradition of Munich and the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Once again, when powerful governments negotiated, the freedom of small nations was somehow expendable. ... The captivity of millions in Central and Eastern Europe will be remembered as one of the greatest wrongs of history.

What Bush did not say was that the men responsible for the sellout of those nations were Churchill and FDR, whose groveling to Stalin at Yalta made Neville Chamberlain look like Davy Crockett at the Alamo.

But if we wish to befriend Russia—and America has no more vital interest—we must try to see the world as Putin sees it. We must try to see Russia from the vantage point of a patriot son who joined his nation's secret service at the apogee of its power, only to see his country collapse, crumble, and fall to pieces in two years.

Before the Reagan era, it was America in retreat all over the world. Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia had fallen to Lenin-

ism, as had Ethiopia, Angola, and Mozambique in Africa, Grenada in the Caribbean, Nicaragua in Central America. Eurocommunism was the rage in Europe.

The Red Army, for the first time since World War II, had invaded a nation outside the Soviet bloc: Afghanistan. Iran had overthrown the pro-American Shah. The United States seemed leaderless, paralyzed, unable to effect the release of its diplomats held hostage in Tehran. For a young KGB officer, it must have been a proud and heady moment to be an officer of a world-girdling empire on the march.

But a decade later, not only had the Soviet Empire collapsed, his country had fallen apart. In 1989, the Red Army was ordered out of Afghanistan. A Soviet surface and submarine navy Admiral Gorchakov had created to challenge the U.S. Navy was now rusting and rotting in dry-dock, being sold off for scrap.

Soviet citizens were stranded and isolated in the outposts of Cuba, Africa, and Southeast Asia. In Germany and every nation east, the cry went up: “Russians, Go Home!”

The Russia they went home to was a truncated nation. The Baltic republics had seceded, as had Ukraine. Ten republics from the Caucasus to Central Asia were gone, among them Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Russia no longer had a common border with Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, or Iran.

The defecting republics were soon turning their backs on Moscow and turning to Washington to join NATO.

Comecon, the Soviets' common market, fell apart, and, after a decade of looting by oligarchs and criminals, Russia's economy was roughly the size of Holland's.

Let us ask ourselves: if the Confederate states had won their war of independence, and New England followed them out of the Union, and British troops were now stationed in both breakaway nations—to insure their independence from Washington—how would patriotic Americans have responded in 1865?

Putin's Russia has suffered a strategic disaster like that of Germany at Versailles. Germany, too, was dismembered, divided, stripped of colonies, bankrupted by war reparations, forced to confess full moral guilt for the war. Allied refusal to rectify these injustices led to the fall of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Hitler.

Putin today leads a nation with a horrific history to confront—the truth of 70 years of Leninism and Stalinism—as his nation undergoes an existential crisis. At a time like this, why are we meddling in the internal affairs of neighboring states to dump over Putin's allies? Why are we building bases in former Soviet republics? Is there some threat there to the United States? Why are we in Putin's face about Russia's failure to measure up to Iowa's standards of democracy?

Making Russia a friend was Reagan's great legacy. But you do not keep a friend by constantly reminding him and incessantly rebuking him for the sins he committed while under the influence of some terrible drug.

Let us pray that Mr. Bush will not let his neoconservatives—whose expertise lies in starting wars on countries that have not attacked us and making enemies of countries that wish to befriend us—kick it away. ■

[the man who was x]

# The Good Strategist

George F. Kennan was more than the architect of America's Cold War victory, he was the last of a line of gentlemen statesmen.

By **Scott McConnell**

WHEN HE DIED IN MARCH at the age of 101, George F. Kennan was remembered principally as America's leading Cold War strategist, one of the "Wise Men" who took control of American foreign policy in the pivotal years after World War II and molded the institutions that shaped the world for the next 50 years. The containment doctrine most associated with him—espousing the need to confront Soviet postwar expansion with an American "counterforce" and holding out the prospect that a Soviet communism denied significant military or political expansion would eventually wither and die—was the central skein of American strategy for two generations after World War II.

Kennan later observed that if the famous "Long Telegram," which he sent to Washington while a Moscow-based diplomat in February 1946, had been delivered six months earlier, it would have fallen on deaf ears. Six months later it would have simply expressed conventional wisdom. Whether that is so, it is a fact that this 8,000-word mis-sive caught Washington's attention the way no diplomatic cable had before or since. In it, Kennan explained that the pursuit of "peaceful co-operation" with Stalin's government was a chimera and that the then widely held view that maintaining the spirit of the anti-Hitler alliance and turning a blind eye to brutal Soviet behavior in Eastern Europe was

the only alternative to war was equally false. Stalin's was a hard-edged, unsentimental government that would not be swayed by the West's concessions or professions of friendship but was highly sensitive to "the logic of force."

The cable's author was summoned home shortly thereafter and made the State Department's first policy-planning chief, under Secretary of State George Marshall. There Kennan became the intellectual architect of the Marshall Plan, which sent billions of dollars to a prostrate Western Europe and helped set up a political-warfare unit, the precursor of the CIA. With the publication a year later of his "X" article in *Foreign Affairs*, Kennan became known as the principal American foreign-policy strategist.

Kennan viewed the Soviet Union primarily as a political and psychological threat, not a military one and by 1948, with the economic reconstruction of Western Europe proceeding, he was convinced the worst of the danger was passed. By 1950, he was already on the dovish side of the Washington establishment and for much of the next decade opposed what he called the militarization of the containment doctrine.

If Kennan had been simply a foreign-affairs expert and an exemplary public servant, a diplomat who formulated a successful strategy to deal with unprecedented danger in a world in

great flux, he would merit an important place in American history. But he was far more than that. After leaving the State Department in 1950, he developed an outstanding second career as a scholar, memoirist, polemicist, and moral philosopher. He was probably the last great American WASP intellectual, the last American man of letters whose thought and instincts were consciously rooted in the American WASP past and who was able to take full advantage of that past's lessons and habits of mind. For Kennan, this history was not a source of guilt or a hurdle to be overcome but a springboard for self-understanding and acting in the world. Indeed, in his work one can see (as one could find virtually nowhere else in America of the 1960s and after), Protestantism as the driving and disciplining cultural force it once was, an inner fire that could push a highly gifted individual to transform himself into a great man.

Kennan came from a middle-class family in Milwaukee and never felt socially comfortable with the richer students from the East he met at Princeton in the 1920s. He joined the Foreign Service after graduation, undertook Russian language training, served in the embassies in Prague, Berlin, and Moscow, and rose steadily in its ranks.

He was a Presbyterian by background who, as he once wrote, regarded himself as a Christian, although others "would



question my right to that status.” But whether he was devout in any orthodox sense, he certainly possessed the inner fire, which left traces throughout his work, as, for instance, when he describes leaving the Department of State in 1950 to become a scholar at Princeton’s Institute for Advanced Study. Kennan writes of a momentary euphoria: “The hours and days of liberty seemed to stretch forward abundantly into a future too remote to be considered finite. There would now, it seemed, be time for everything.” He wanders into the Princeton bookstore, “intoxicated with the illusion of freedom” and purchases Calvin’s *Institutes*, sits down on a bench outside and reads “with pleasure and profit.” But the illusion of happiness could not last, and spiritual strain soon makes its appearance. As he writes, “the private diaries now began to contain more in the way of self-reproaches, complaints of the vanity of current preoccupations, protests about the aimlessness of one’s existence, yearnings for a greater unity and seriousness of purpose.”

HE WAS MORE OR LESS THE **FOUNDER OF THE REALIST SCHOOL** IN AMERICAN FOREIGN-POLICY THOUGHT, WARY OF THE ROLE **ETHNIC LOBBIES** AND **CONGRESSIONAL ENTHUSIASMS** PLAYED IN THE **FORMULATION OF FOREIGN POLICY.**

Thus, a glimpse into the inner life of a man of middle age—one who had just completed a stint in government during which he played a pre-eminent role in shaping the strategic posture of the United States, and hence the West, towards Stalinist Russia, and who would in the ensuing decade publish four volumes of highly regarded scholarship about the history of America’s relations with the Soviet Union and two more about American foreign policy—lamenting his “aimlessness” and exhort-

ing himself to greater “seriousness of purpose.”

Kennan’s writing covered a vast ground, including the publication of two volumes of memoirs that won him the Pulitzer Prize, a spirited polemic with 1960s radical students and their fellow travelers, numerous essays on nuclear weapons and Soviet-American relations, and a semi-philosophical iteration of his general worldview published when he was 89.

He was more or less the founder of the realist school in American foreign-policy thought, wary of the role ethnic lobbies and congressional enthusiasms played in the formulation of foreign policy and of the country’s seemingly irrepressible need to view conflicts with other nations as black and white moral crusades. His bestselling book *American Diplomacy* introduced the term “national interest” into the foreign-policy lexicon. In Kennan’s view, the term was a brief not for selfishness but modesty, for recognition that “our own national interest is all that we are really capable of knowing and understanding.”

Over a wide range of subjects, Kennan could produce passages that were remarkably free of the whole bundle of multiculturalist concessions and guilt that had managed to overwhelm the WASP sense of self in the 1960s. His writing could sometimes sound like a voice from a distant past, and yet it enabled him to address the range of subjects around the intersection of the United States and other civilizations like no other American in the second half of the 20th century.

At the opening of his memoirs, Kennan wrote of his own family,

Its members were neither rich nor poor. They never owned an appreciable amount of capital. There was not one who did not work long and hard with his hands. They were, on the other hand, as devoid of self-consciousness with regard to their poverty as they were of social bitterness over the fact that it existed... [W]hen times were hard, as they often were, groans and lamentations went up to God, but never to Washington ... No family could have been more remote from the classic social predicament to which Marx, outstandingly, had drawn attention and to which his followers tended to ascribe so overwhelming a significance.

Thus Kennan credits his background for inoculating him against taking Marxism too seriously, an inoculation that the majority of intellectuals of his era plainly did not receive. It served him well in the 1930s and especially the 1940s, when he became, in effect, the United States’ most important interpreter of Marxist ideology and its role, or lack of one, in Stalin’s foreign policy.

But this frugal pioneer-stock background could be wielded to make other, more polemical points. For instance, in *The Cloud of Danger*, a foreign-policy treatise published in 1977, Kennan touches on the then extremely volatile subject of Third World development and the relations between the “rich” and “poor” countries. He wrote, “I have before me ... a faded snapshot, recently sent to me by a relative, of the log house in which my great-grandparents lived when they first came, in 1851, to the Green Bay region of Wisconsin: a crude almost windowless structure, standing in a dreary treeless field. And I am



moved to recall that the Wisconsin of that day was very much of what we today would call an underdeveloped country.” He then proceeds to describe the growth of the state’s governing institutions, the development of tolerance and respect for majority opinion, how its inhabitants made use of developmental capital acquired at normal rates of interest, all which made Wisconsin today “the seat of a high prosperity—too high, I sometimes think, for the good of its own inhabitants.” And then there follows, in a broadside at the pervasive and cacophonous discourse about the rapacious North and the noble South then emanating from the United Nations and virtually every establishment newspaper and major university president, “Had we Wisconsinites been a lazy, violent, improvident people, devoted more to war than to industry ... and had we therefore remained undeveloped instead of developing our resources—would we today be seen as possessors of a peculiar virtue vis-à-vis the more developed countries, entitling us to put claims on their beneficence and to demand of them that they exert themselves to promote our development?” The West, Kennan concluded, needed to divest itself of its guilt complex in its dealings with the Third World.

Throughout Kennan’s memoirs are insights that would have tested the boundaries of political correctness, had the concept a name at the time, and some which transgressed the sensibilities that actually did exist. In 1950, for instance, Kennan, still an employee of the State Department, was sent on a multi-country tour of Latin America, culminating in an American ambassadors’ conference in Rio de Janeiro. In his diaries, he recalls being haunted by the huge gaps between the rich and poor and dismayed most of all by the despairing opulence of the “hopelessly rich.”

Upon his return, he filed a report that the head of State’s Latin American division promptly locked away from view, saying it did not belong in the department’s archives. In his memoirs, published 16 years later, Kennan quoted from it. Latin America, he wrote, was disfavored by geography and climate and weighted down by its history, permeated by a “heavy, melancholy force.” Noting the “inordinate splendor” and “pretense” of Latin American cities and the “squalor” of their hinterlands, he wrote, “[I]n the realm of individual personality this subconscious recognition

Noting that no Latin American country possessed nuclear weapons or was even thinking of acquiring them, he concluded that the region “may prove some day to be the last repository and custodian of humane Christian values that men in the European motherlands and in North America—overfed, overorganized, and blinded by fear and ambition—have thrown away.”

Of comparable interest was Kennan’s view of China. He was never a Sinophile of any stripe, neither an enthusiast of China’s Maoist revolution nor of the powerful China lobby of the 1950s,

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of the failure of group effort finds its expression in an exaggerated self-centeredness and egotism—in a pathetic urge to create the illusion of desperate courage, supreme cleverness, and a limitless virility where the more constructive virtues are so conspicuously lacking.”

One can see why the State Department might shield Foreign Service officers from these observations without concluding Kennan was wrong in making them. In his memoirs, Kennan added a sort of amendment, writing that despite the tragic aspect of Latin American civilization, “in another sense” it might be humanity’s best hope for the future. In phrases that reflected his increasingly critical view of the United States, he wrote that he might well prefer the human ego in its Latin American manifestations, “spontaneous, uninhibited, and full-throated,” to the “carefully masked and poisonously perverted forms it assumes among the Europeans and the Anglo-Americans.”

which sought to enlist Washington’s support for restoring Chiang Kai-shek to power on the mainland. Kennan thought that little good could come from too close relations with the Chinese, whom he considered masterful at manipulating American perceptions of them. Mao’s revolution and the expulsion of Westerners from China meant for the first time, China held no more American “hostages” whose views were inevitably corrupted by their own affections. Of the Chinese themselves, Kennan wrote that they were “probably the most intelligent, man for man, of the world’s peoples.” But “admirable as were many of their qualities—their industriousness, their business honesty, their practical astuteness ... they seemed to me to be lacking in two attributes of the Western-Christian mentality: the capacity for pity and the sense of sin. I was quite prepared to concede that both of these qualities represented weaknesses rather than sources of strength in the Western character. The Chinese, presumably, were all

the more formidable for the lack of them.”

Two generations after these discussions on Latin America and China were published, it is far from clear they are anachronistic or irrelevant. One could meaningfully debate whether or not they are correct. What is more certain is that today no American official, in or close to government, would dream of committing such thoughts to paper—or even be capable of entertaining them. However many self-professed devout Christians may now inhabit the upper echelons of the present administration, are there any who could conceive of their own country having a “Western-Christian” mentality in a nuanced fashion or use such vocabulary? It is far easier to imagine a contemporary Christian nationalist advocating that Washington attack or invade non-Christian countries, a prescription more based on ignorance of the targeted countries than knowledge of them.

Isolationist is not the right word for Kennan, and the term realist is too freighted with calculations of power politics to be quite correct either. Perhaps the perspective of these passages can be described by a term like civiliza-

tional—a point of view that combines understanding and attachment to one’s own tradition, awareness of its differences with others, and alertness to the possibility that distance can be a wise thing for the diplomat to cultivate. It is a conservative viewpoint in the true sense, which makes it the antithesis of contemporary neoconservatism and neoliberalism, as well as all universalist ideologies. Needless to say, it is a kind of voice that is no longer heard at all in the top echelons of official Washington.

In the last decades of his life, Kennan was increasingly critical of American

with denser, more concentrated cities, a citizenry that read more and spent more time outdoors and watched less television. He opposed mass immigration, saying that a society that depended on cheap outside labor was like the Romans, who became dependent on barbarians to fill the ranks of their armies. He found it absurd that Washington, “while not loath to putting half a million armed troops into the Middle East to expel armed Iraqis from Kuwait, confesses itself unable to defend its own southwestern border from illegal immigration.” He recognized, of course, that

**ISOLATIONIST** IS NOT THE RIGHT WORD FOR KENNAN, AND THE TERM **REALIST** IS TOO FREIGHTED WITH **CALCULATIONS OF POWER POLITICS** TO BE CORRECT EITHER.

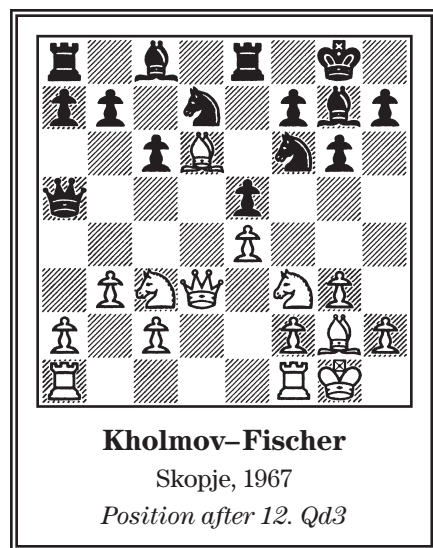
society, its ecological waste, its commercialism, in some sense its superficiality. In the 1980s he emerged as a vociferous critic of the American defense strategy, based as it was on the possible first use of nuclear weapons. In the last book he wrote, *Around the Cragged Hill*, published in 1993, he welcomed the Cold War’s end as providing the United States a chance once again to cut a more modest figure in the world, arguing that the greatest service this country could render would be to put its own house in order and make of American civilization an example from which others could take inspiration.

He thought the United States had grown too large for successful self-government, urging that it consider dividing itself into smaller constituent republics. He questioned the whole point of an economy based on constant growth, wondering if there was not “something diseased, something cancerous, something open-ended and unstable” about an economy that had always to expand to be seen as adequate. He would have preferred a nation that traveled by train,

his speculations were idle—that there was no possibility of the political system accommodating his views and that a man who questioned some American shibboleths was simply regarded with “gasping horror.”

Kennan’s point of view—that of a Russell Kirk conservative with Green tendencies, elitist in tone, infused with serious experience in government and knowledge of the world—is today far outside the mainstream. The United States did not turn inward at the end of the Cold War, showed not the slightest inclination to abandon the quest for big-ness, and has pursued foreign policies exactly the opposite of what Kennan recommended.

But none should doubt that a century or two hence, whatever fate has befallen the United States in its immodest and beligerent quest for world “democratic” empire, George F. Kennan’s voice will be seen as of the peak of dissident wisdom, and historians will note that the United States would have been extremely fortunate to have had men like him with the president’s ear in 2002, as it did in 1946. ■



[right and might]

# Trigger Man

In Paul Wolfowitz, messianic vision meets faith in the efficacy of force.

By Andrew J. Bacevich

"MODERN POLITICS IS, at bottom, a struggle not of men but of forces." So observed Henry Adams nearly a century ago. Yet the men engaged in that struggle fascinate us: through them otherwise latent forces that actually shape politics are made manifest.

In recent years, Paul Wolfowitz has been the object of such fascination, extravagantly admired in some quarters for his strategic acumen, reviled in others as a reckless warmonger. It is easy to see why: more than any of the other *dramatis personae* in contemporary Washington, Wolfowitz embodies the central convictions to which the United States in the age of Bush subscribes—in particular, an extraordinary certainty in the righteousness of American actions married to extraordinary confidence in the efficacy of American arms.

Historians will remember Wolfowitz not as the architect of the Iraq War but as the chief proponent of a radical shift in American thinking about war more generally. Since the 1980s, even before the collapse of the Soviet empire elevated the United States to the status of sole superpower, Wolfowitz has been pressing insistently for a more expansive, forward-leaning approach to using armed force.

Nominally, the inspiration of this project was straightforward: it aimed to enhance U.S. national security. As Wolfowitz saw it, when faced with burgeoning threats, American policymakers have habitually tended to prevaricate. Yet putting off problems merely permits them to

fester. Delay serves only to exacerbate danger. In the game of international security, the governing rule was a simple one: pay me now or pay me later. Wolfowitz believed that paying up front could markedly reduce the final tab. Well-conceived, adroitly executed action—with action necessarily implying the actual or threatened use of force—could nip threats in the bud. Although conceding that no action was without risk, he felt certain that "the risks of inaction ultimately are greater." This comment, made in reference to Iraq in 2002, reflected a more general predisposition.

Yet in a broader sense, the project consuming Wolfowitz also possessed a teleological dimension. In the bold and skillful use of military power, he believed, lay the prospect of resolving the contradictions that had long made statecraft the realm of moral ambiguity and compromise. During the 1940s, and especially during the ominous early days of the Cold War, a series of influential thinkers—Hans Morgenthau, Walter Lippmann, George Kennan, and above all Reinhold Niebuhr—had each in different ways made the point that if the United States intended to play the part of a responsible great power then it had no alternative but to deal with the devil: the preservation of American freedom demanded that the United States tolerate, accommodate, and in some instances even collaborate with evil.

Niebuhr rendered the definitive judgment: "power cannot be wielded with-

out guilt." Applied to liberal, democratic America, this somber assessment had two implications: first, it rendered obsolete claims of innocence dating back to the founding of Anglo-America; second, it imposed sharp limits on the uses of power. According to Niebuhr, there was no escaping this vise. Any attempt to do so would produce dire consequences, practical but above all moral.

A succession of administrations, both Republican and Democratic, had tacitly endorsed this view. During World War II, Franklin Roosevelt had hailed the murderous Josef Stalin as a great and glorious ally. Following the war, the swelling roster of American friends came to include Batista and Somoza, Marcos and Diem, the king of Saudi Arabia and the Shah of Iran. The year 1972 found a fervently anti-communist American president in Beijing paying obeisance to China's megalomaniacal "Great Helmsman."

McGeorge Bundy, national security adviser to John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, once remarked apropos of Vietnam, "Gray is the color of truth." During long decades of the Cold War, the entire fabric of U.S. policy seemingly consisted of various shades of gray.

Paul Wolfowitz rejected Bundy's bleak assessment. He bridled against Niebuhr's judgment. He refused to concede the impossibility of reconciling power and interests with moral purpose. He was in this sense cut from the same cloth as Ronald Reagan: received circumstance was not destiny. But

whereas Reagan looked to the fantasies of Star Wars to void the amorality of Mutual Assured Destruction, Wolfowitz plotted a more subtle and sophisticated, if in the end equally problematic, means of escape.

Wolfowitz ranked among the first national-security specialists to appreciate the military potential of advanced information technology. Computers could change the very nature of modern warfare—not by creating an impenetrable defensive shield as Reagan had hoped but by opening up new possibilities for offensive action.

At the center of this putative military revolution lay the concept of precision. The advent of weapons of unprecedented accuracy, Wolfowitz once told an interviewer, “translates into a whole transformation of strategy and politics.” In an era when nuclear weapons had persuaded many that war had become all but unthinkable, accuracy promised to restore war’s political utility. For policymakers, accuracy would also ease moral inhibitions against choosing to employ force. Simply put, precision could undo Hiroshima and unshackle military power. Best of all was the fact that the United States led the way in every aspect of the information revolution. In an information age, military supremacy was America’s for the taking.

Wolfowitz did not invent these ideas. The intellectual godfather of precision warfare was Albert Wohlstetter, who had been Wolfowitz’s graduate-school mentor and whose student Wolfowitz very much remained. But whereas Wohlstetter, the defense intellectual, had chosen to make his career outside the political arena, Wolfowitz pursued his ambitions as an insider. Increasingly well placed and well respected, cultivating a network of likeminded colleagues and honing his already impressive bureaucratic skills, he emerged by the time of the first Persian Gulf War as the

most influential advocate of this imaginative effort to reinvent warfare.

Among national-security specialists, Wolfowitz was also uniquely attuned to the possibility of tapping this new way of war so as to bring U.S. strategic imperatives back into harmony with professed ideals. In the new way of war lay the possibility of washing the gray out of the fabric of American policy.

As the end of the 20th century approached, Providence was clearly summoning the United States to rule. Yet for Wolfowitz, the summons to rule complemented rather than transcended America’s prior mission to redeem. If the New Rome, the United States also remained the New Jerusalem. As Wolfowitz saw it, the possession of great military power facilitated the merger of these seemingly antipathetic roles. America’s interests and American ideology were becoming indistinguishable.

One prospective result would be to free American statesmen from ever again aligning the United States with Stalin to defeat Hitler or with Mao to check Brezhnev. Never again would *raison d’etat* oblige presidents to soil themselves by associating with execrable tin-pot dictators. Through military power, the United States could recapture the innocence sullied in the aftermath of the nation’s rise to great-power status. An American-dominated military revolution could revive American Exceptionalism and disprove Niebuhr.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, using American muscle to advance American values around the world became for Wolfowitz a moral imperative. It was also, he believed, the essence of the new American diplomacy. Remaining passive in the face of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, genocide in Africa, or oppression in the Persian Gulf was not only wrong, but foolhardy. As never before, doing good carried with it the prospect of the nation

doing well. By taking advantage of vast new opportunities to put U.S. military might to work protecting human rights and advancing the cause of freedom, the United States could actually cement its position of global primacy.

Again, the concept was by no means unique to Wolfowitz. During the Clinton era—for Wolfowitz, wilderness years spent in academe—many others, most notably writers and activists associated with the Religious Right and the so-called neoconservative movement, were expressing similar views. But these chatterers never wielded more than limited clout. The inauguration of George W. Bush in 2001 positioned newly appointed Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz to advocate these ideas where advocacy counted most.

For Wolfowitz, therefore, the unspeakable tragedy of 9/11 also signified a unique opportunity, which he quickly seized. Urging that the global war against terror be recast as a global war on behalf of freedom, he placed himself in the vanguard of those calling for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. A war to liberate Iraq promised to change the face of American grand strategy. By irrevocably committing the United States to a broader and heavily militarized campaign aimed at liberating the entire Islamic world, it would signify the triumph of principles that Wolfowitz had long espoused.

But for that triumph to occur, the war needed to happen. In this sense, the yearnings for a peaceful resolution expressed by Wolfowitz and other senior Bush administration officials during the run-up to Operation Iraqi Freedom surely qualify as disingenuous. The object of the exercise was never to disarm Saddam peacefully. The aim was always to demonstrate the invincibility of American arms, thereby resetting in a fundamental way the international correlation of power globally, and especially in the



Islamic world. Violence as such was a *sine qua non*, its use expected to endow the United States with greater reserves of leverage, influence, and respect.

In the months preceding the U.S.-led invasion, with the ranks of those opposing the administration swelling, Wolfowitz figured prominently among the officials called upon to rebut any objections to war. Never has a deputy cabinet secretary played such a visible role in making the case for a policy so fraught with controversy. Cool, imperturbable, and relentlessly "on message," Wolfowitz performed impressively. Only once did his mask of self-assurance slip: when the United States Army, in the person of its chief of staff, Gen. Eric Shinseki, ventured to say nay.

The clash between Shinseki and Wolfowitz received considerable media coverage. For some, it lives on as emblematic of the arrogance and overconfidence attributed to the Bush administration on the eve of war. But the full significance of this civil-military confrontation remains unappreciated. For Shinseki, an honorable soldier with few intellectual pretensions, was also in his own way the embodiment of specific forces, very much at odds with those that Wolfowitz had championed. Although couching his critique in green-eyeshade, bean-counting terms, the general set out to subvert the very project that represented the deputy defense secretary's life's work.

The administration, Shinseki told members of Congress, was badly underestimating the number of troops that pacifying Iraq was likely to require. Given that the requisite additional troops simply did not exist, Shinseki was implicitly arguing that the U.S. armed services were inadequate for the enterprise. Further, he was implying that invasion was likely to produce something other than a crisp, tidy decision; from a soldier's viewpoint, a display of

precision warfare was not likely to settle the matter. "Liberation" would leave loose ends. Unexpected and costly complications would abound.

In effect, Shinseki was offering a last-ditch defense of the military tradition that Wolfowitz was intent on destroying, a tradition that saw armies as fragile, that sought to husband military power, and that classified force as an option of last resort. The risks of action, Shinseki was suggesting, were far, far greater than the advocates for war had let on.

THE **NORMALLY UNFLAPPABLE WOLFOWITZ** RESPONDED WITH UNCHARACTERISTIC BRUSQUENESS, **CAUSTICALLY DISMISSING THE GENERAL'S ESTIMATE AS "WILDLY OFF THE MARK."**

Shinseki's critique elicited an immediate retaliatory response. One could safely ignore the complaints of liberal Democrats or the *New York Times*, not to mention those coming from a largely inchoate antiwar movement. But if the brass openly opposed the war, they could halt the march on Baghdad even before it began. Besides, how could Shinseki dare even to raise the question of an occupation? Wolfowitz was already on the record as declaring that the United States was "committed to liberating the people of Iraq, not to becoming an occupation force." Shinseki had to be discredited then and there, lest the opportunity to validate the new American way of war be lost forever.

So the normally unflappable Wolfowitz responded with uncharacteristic brusqueness, caustically dismissing the general's estimate as "wildly off the mark." For his dissent, Shinseki paid dearly. Publicly rebuked and immediately marginalized, he soon retired, his fate an object lesson for other senior military professionals. (The episode affirmed the Rumsfeld-Wolfowitz theory

of civil-military relations: heap lavish public praise on soldiers in the ranks while keeping the generals and admirals on an exceedingly short leash.)

In the end, Wolfowitz got his war. Operation Iraqi Freedom provided the first salvo in an open-ended campaign to transform the Islamic world. Should the conduct of that campaign require the anticipatory use of force, it also provided ample precedent to do just that.

Two years later, Wolfowitz has won a promotion, having been elevated to the

presidency of the World Bank. From this even more prominent position, he vows to bring to the eradication of global poverty the same energy that he demonstrated in revitalizing war. According to the standard Washington metric, his appointment qualifies as a triumphal vindication not only of the man but also of the policies he represents.

The contrast with the fate of his chief antagonist could hardly be more vivid. General Shinseki has all but vanished. In an age when senior officers with scores to settle typically vent their spleen by publishing self-exculpatory memoirs or becoming political partisans, Shinseki, ever the traditionalist, has maintained a studied silence. Immensely generous to Wolfowitz, fate has seemingly treated Shinseki unfairly.

Yet this immediate accounting deceives. A balanced assessment of Wolfowitz's legacy must note that he leaves behind unfinished business and unresolved questions related to precisely those matters about which he cared most: the political utility and moral implications of military power. The

forces that he represented and the events that he helped set in motion have yielded at best mixed results.

In its trial run, the doctrine of preventive war—Wolfowitz's handiwork as much as the president's—has produced liberation and occupation, a crisp demonstration of "shock and awe" and a protracted, debilitating insurgency, the dramatic toppling of a dictator and horrifying evidence implicating American soldiers in torture and other abuses. The Iraq War has now entered its third year with no end in sight, taxing U.S. forces to the limit. The ongoing conflict has divided the nation like no event since Vietnam. Like Vietnam, it is sapping our economic strength and has already done immeasurable damage to our standing in the world. Despite expectations of Saddam's overthrow paving the way for what some expected to be a foreign policy of moral incandescence, the United States finds itself obliged once again to compromise its ideals, cozying up to little Saddams like Pakistan's Pervez Musharraf and Uzbekistan's Islam Karimov.

The forces that Paul Wolfowitz helped unleash—a dangerous combination of hubris and naïveté—are exacting an ever mounting cost. His considerable exertions notwithstanding, truth in matters of statecraft remains implacably gray. Even assuming honorable intentions on the part of those who conceived this war, wielding power in Iraq has left the United States up to its ankles, if not up to its knees, in guilt.

In his solitude, General Shinseki can await the final judgment of history with considerable confidence. At the pinnacle of professional success, Paul Wolfowitz must look forward to a different verdict that will be anything but kind. ■

*Andrew J. Bacevich, professor of international relations at Boston University, is the author of The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War.*

## Muzzling Mideast Studies

The neocon assault on academic dissent

By Anders Strindberg

IN OCTOBER 2004, the *New York Sun* reported that a Boston-based student activist group called the David Project had produced a film documenting the supposedly horrifying conditions at Columbia University: Jewish students were allegedly subjected to intimidation, verbal abuse, and systematic discrimination by pro-Palestinian faculty. Entitled "Columbia Unbecoming," it contained interviews with students the *Sun* described as feeling "threatened academically for expressing a pro-Israel point of view in classrooms," but featured none of the accused professors nor the satisfied majority of students.

"Columbia Unbecoming" generated a swift response. Congressman Anthony Weiner, along with the *Sun* and the *New York Daily News* editorial pages, called for the dismissal of a professor named in the film. Members of the New York City Council demanded investigations. The *Sun* labeled the incident the "Crisis at Columbia"; a November 21 *Daily News* story was headlined "Poison Ivy: Climate of Hate Rocks Columbia University."

The controversy at Columbia is part of a broader neoconservative effort to suppress debate over U.S. policy in the Middle East. Following the 9/11 atrocities, neoconservative commentators were up in arms about the "failure" of Middle East studies: scholars should have realized the imminent danger of the Islamic revival and focused on terrorism instead of theory. "America's academics have failed to predict or explain the major evolutions of Middle Eastern politics and society over the past two decades," wrote Martin Kramer, an

Israeli academic and senior editor of *Middle East Quarterly*. American scholars, he argued, "have been taken by surprise by their subjects; time and again, their paradigms have been swept away by events."

Scholars had long warned that American interventionism in the Middle East could create a harmful backlash. Prior to 9/11, such warnings were dismissed as either "isolationism" or "Third Worldism." Today, the suggestion that our foreign policy could somehow be connected to regional resentment is lambasted as "anti-Americanism."

The tenor of the neoconservative assault has grown uglier, turning from sharp ideological criticism to smears redolent of the worst excesses of the McCarthy era. Scholars once ridiculed as "irrelevant" and "obscure" now find themselves recast as "America haters," "supporters of terrorism," and "radical left-wingers" who need to be sniffed out and disposed of. "Academic colleagues, get used to it," wrote the ever-vigilant Kramer. "You are being watched. Those obscure articles in campus newspapers are now available on the Internet, and they will be harvested. Your syllabi, which you've also posted, will be scrutinized. Your websites will be visited late at night."

Neoconservative cadres claim that "wrong thought" in Middle East studies tracks with the rise of the Left on campus, casting their campaign as a struggle for conservative values. In March 2005, the Randolph Foundation released a survey on political attitudes among faculty at American universities showing that 72 percent of scholars

described themselves as liberal while only 15 percent claimed to be conservative. These findings have been ceaselessly repeated to bolster the case against Middle East studies. Yet criticism of Israel, like ideas about how to deal with the Middle East generally, does not comfortably fit into a Left and Right paradigm. Every recent American president has called for a halt to Israeli settlements on the West Bank, looked towards a just solution to the Palestine issue, and taken positions on relations with Arab states and Islamist movements that neoconservatives would now characterize as leftist. The attempt to appropriate conservatism for this campaign is fraudulent.

Another tactic is to advance the bogus claim that American academia is awash with anti-Semitic teaching. Universities are saturated with politically correct hypersensitivity on racial and religious issues. Their codes of conduct proscribe abuse, intimidation, and incendiary remarks by students and faculty alike. Anti-Semitic incidents on campus are deplorable, but by falsely alleging a massive surge of hate crimes traceable to "the dangerous ideas of the professors," the commissars are not only crying wolf but actively creating an ethnic issue where ethnicity is not the issue.

Columbia has been besieged for a simple reason: it seemed a ripe target. The university combines a large body of Jewish students with active pro-Israel groups but is also home to several of the leaders of Palestinian-American intellectual life. If the commissars could unseat unacceptable faculty, a powerful warning would be sent to universities across America, chilling debate.

The late Palestinian-American professor Edward Said taught at Columbia from the mid-1960s until his death in September 2003. Said was not only an outspoken critic of American Middle East policy and a passionate advocate of

Palestinian rights but also a widely respected scholar. Confronting and discrediting Said thus developed into an early imperative-cum-obsession for the neoconservative activists.

After his death, Columbia created an Edward Said Chair of Arab Studies, and another Palestinian-American, Rashid Khalidi, formerly a professor at the University of Chicago, took up the position. Even before Khalidi accepted the post, however, Daniel Pipes, columnist for the *New York Sun* and the *Jerusalem Post* and founder of the most important of the watchdog groups, Campus Watch, complained that the new appointee "is just the picture of what is wrong with Middle East academic specialists in the United States." He explained that Khalidi "is extreme. He is inaccurate. He is apologetic to tyranny and radicalism," but "that's what Columbia likes."

Khalidi, an Oxford Ph.D. and the author of six books on the Middle East, has lamented American ignorance on

biased scholar to head a biased department." Demanding "balance," neoconservative groups launched a campaign against Columbia's only chair in modern Arab studies while lobbying for the creation of a new chair in Israel studies—in addition to the six endowed chairs in Jewish studies already in existence.

Khalidi has tenure and is virtually impossible to fire, but there are other ways to get to people. Following a propaganda barrage, with the editorial support of the *New York Sun* and other local dailies, the New York City Department of Education dismissed Khalidi in February 2005 from a K-12 teacher-training program. Khalidi was fired on the basis of past statements critical of Israel, even though he had already participated in the program twice without generating any complaints. "I think there's a broad attack on professors of the Middle East," Khalidi noted, "and it's based on calumnies, innuendo, and taking situations out of context."

## COLUMBIA HAS BEEN BESIEGED BECAUSE IT SEEMED A RIPE TARGET.

matters related to the Middle East and has been an articulate critic of U.S. and Israeli policy. But by no stretch of the imagination is he an extremist, simply a bona fide "public intellectual."

"As a Jew, I can attest to the fact that Khalidi is hardly the anti-Semite," Halley Bondy, a Columbia student, recently wrote in the *Daily News*. "The lecture hall is filled to capacity with well over 100 students who fought tooth and nail to enroll." This mattered little to Pipes, who griped, "I think it's a problem that these universities award people with such extreme and unhealthy views with such prestigious positions." FrontPageMag.com similarly complained, "Khalidi's move to Columbia involves a biased scholar accepting an anonymously endowed chair named for a

Few academics know this better than Joseph Massad, an assistant professor in Columbia's Middle East and Asian Languages and Culture Department (MEALAC). He is the faculty member who has been targeted most ruthlessly, ostensibly because he is the most outrageous critic of Israel and Zionism. But a more sinister rationale lurks in the background. "They're trying to make an example of him," said a Columbia academic. "Massad does not have tenure yet, and if they can get him fired from Columbia, this will be sufficient to communicate to institutions across the country that they need to vet candidates for compatibility with neocon views."

Massad began teaching at Columbia in 1999, giving a course called "Palestinian and Israeli Politics and Societies."

The class was hugely popular and its size nearly doubled the second year, but his open criticism of Israel attracted attention. Moves by fellow faculty, students, and outside pressure groups to have Massad fired were in the offing.

Virtually every syllable written or uttered by Massad has been scrutinized and lambasted by the neoconservative machine. While the scholarly value of Massad's theories and conclusions should be analyzed and questioned, Pipes, Kramer, and their cohorts are concerned simply with denying anyone a right to have a view contrary to theirs.

An April 7, 2002 *Columbia Spectator* article misquoted Massad as having said, at a political rally away from the classroom, that Israel is "a Jewish supremacist and racist state" and that "every racist state should be threatened." He had said no such thing, the journalist apologized, and the paper ran a correction. But the article, along with its errors, continued to be rehashed: to this day, Campus Watch runs the original article on its website but not the correction. The erroneous quotation was highlighted by Kramer in an article in *Middle East Quarterly*, prompting him to question whether "someone who is busy propagandizing against the existence of Israel [should] be employed by Columbia..."

Massad also appeared in Campus Watch's brief attempt to maintain online dossiers on those they characterized as academic enemies of America and Israel, with a call for students to monitor and report on classes. Spam, hate mail, and death threats flooded Massad's inbox, and e-mails threatening terrorism were sent out to public figures, including members of Congress, in his name.

Behind the scenes, several national Jewish organizations convened in March 2002 to evaluate what they saw as the alarming rise in anti-Israel activity on campus. The result was the establish-

ment of the Israel on Campus Coalition (ICC). According to an article carried by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, the effort resulted in an action plan according to which "the primary goal for this year should be to 'take back the campus' by influencing public opinion through lectures, the Internet and coalitions." Not, important to note, through scholarship.

"Columbia Unbecoming," produced by the ICC's sole institutional affiliate, is an example of how this is supposed to work. Robert Pollack, a former dean of Columbia College who led the effort to raise \$13 million to build the Kraft Center—which houses Columbia's Jewish community center and in which much of the movie was filmed—remarked, "It is a crazy, crazy exaggeration to claim that Jews are under attack at Columbia or that the faculty is anti-Semitic."

In December 2004, the university nevertheless established an Ad Hoc Grievance Committee to review charges against faculty members and called for witnesses to step forward. The committee was not being asked to investigate

the faculty that could reasonably be construed as anti-Semitic." As for specific complaints against Massad and two of his MEALAC colleagues, Hamid Dabashi and George Saliba, the report exonerated the latter two but found that two complaints against Massad for politically motivated intemperate behavior were "credible"—despite conflicting and vague witness testimonies. The incidents had not been mentioned in teaching evaluations, and Massad—corroborated by other students and two teaching assistants—denied the charges.

"They clearly made a scapegoat of him," remarked another Columbia scholar. "They needed to throw something to the pressure groups to make them ease up. But the report showed once and for all that the issue of anti-Semitism at Columbia is a fabrication, a sham."

The campaign continues, now on the grounds that the committee was a collegial whitewash because it found no evidence. Meanwhile, Columbia president Lee Bollinger, one of America's foremost First Amendment scholars, continues

## SPAM, HATE MAIL, AND DEATH THREATS FLOODED MASSAD'S INBOX.

political or scholarly opinions, course content, nor, as Massad had requested, intimidation of faculty, but was limited to identifying "cases where there appear to be violations of the obligation to create a civil and tolerant teaching environment in which opposing views can be expressed." Students registered complaints that they claimed to have been too afraid to make previously or simply had forgotten about until "Columbia Unbecoming" reminded them.

The committee issued its report on March 28, 2005. It found no "evidence that students had been penalized for their views by receiving lower grades," nor "evidence of any statements made by

not to stand up for either his university or its faculty's freedom of speech. It has been reported that Bollinger is under significant pressure from pro-Israel alumni, who could complicate fundraising goals, particularly as they relate to the university's plans for a \$5 billion project to expand into West Harlem.

A new storm is also brewing, this time concerning membership of the committee tasked with appointing a scholar to Columbia's new chair in modern Israel studies. In late April, the *New York Sun* warned that two of the five members "have portrayed Israel as a gross abuser of human rights and an obstacle to Middle East peace." One of these is Lila



Abu-Lughod, a prominent professor of anthropology; the other is Rashid Khalidi. The *Sun* quoted Martin Kramer as complaining that the inclusion of Abu-Lughod and Khalidi risked narrowing the range of acceptable scholars to those who are “left-of-center to the far left in the Israeli political spectrum.”

The Columbia affair is typical of the asymmetry of resources that characterizes the assault on academia. For all the furor, the railing against Massad has been limited to a small collection of non-academic neoconservative groups and an equally small group of undergraduates. But their political clout, media savvy, and well-organized activist cadre create the illusion that they represent a vast current.

On the other side stand embattled scholars, few of whom are as media savvy, none of whom have comparable financial resources, time, or staff. They may espouse controversial theories with which everyone is entitled to disagree—including the students at Columbia University. Yet politically motivated accusations by groups that want to stifle dissent have brought about a situation in which scholars are forced to spend their time sifting through hate mail and fighting the threat of dismissal.

What the critics of Middle East studies demand, they say, is truth and diversity. “We’re simply talking about failure to teach facts, failure to give two sides of an issue,” Alan Dershowitz told the Conference on Academic Integrity and the Middle East, held at Columbia in March 2005. While this is laudable, the pressure groups’ own ideas of “fact” are as one-sided as anything of which they have accused the professors. Morton Klein, head of the Zionist Organization of America, addressed the same conference precisely to explain “the facts”: anti-Zionism is always the same as anti-Semitism; Israeli human-rights abuses are “minor”; there is no Israeli occupa-

tion of the West Bank; the demand to dismantle Jewish settlements amounts to racism and ethnic cleansing; and Israel is in no way culpable for the Palestinian refugee crisis. Frequent audience applause indicated that this does indeed pass for balance among the pressure groups and their supporters.

Very few of the commissars are academics. Those who are, like Kramer, have elected to engage in polemics rather than scholarship. Once the author of scholarly work on Middle East politics and society, Kramer now fills his weblog with political diatribes against colleagues whom he thinks have been given undeserved positions, promotions, funding, or attention. Like Pipes, he shows a peculiar disdain for scholarship, preferring instead mudslinging, trivialization, and sarcasm that seems to indicate an intellectually lethal overdose of sour grapes. As the Columbia debacle indicates, however, it may actually be more effective than proper scholarship.

And the David Project is threatening to produce more documentaries about other campuses. “This is just the beginning,” warned Eric Posner, a student at Columbia and former soldier in the Israeli army who supports the faculty’s right to free speech. “This is the spearhead of a whole informant movement that is wading into American academia.”

This is a warning that needs to be taken seriously, as evidenced by reactions to the report that Khalidi has applied for the newly endowed Robert Niehaus ‘78 Chair in Contemporary Middle East Studies at Princeton University. The *Daily Princetonian* quoted Arlene Pedovitch, interim director of the Center for Jewish Life (CJL), as warning that “some Princeton alumni are very concerned about the possibility of Princeton University hiring an individual who has a political agenda rather than a scholarly approach to history.” These remarks drew a scathing

response from Stanley Katz, a CJL board member, who accused Pedovitch of contributing to a repeat of the Columbia controversy: “If CJL wants to turn Princeton into Columbia, I want nothing more to do with it.”

The *Princetonian* reported that Pedovitch fears that the appointment of Khalidi would regenerate Princeton’s image from the 1950s as a school hostile to Jews. Others have suggested that, as a result, Jewish student enrollment would decline and donors would be less generous. Student activists are already reported to have considered petitions against Khalidi’s candidacy, and the pressure groups and tabloids are taking an increasing interest.

Princeton is home to over 1,100 faculty members and almost 5,000 undergraduates. It houses more scholars listed on Campus Watch’s list of “recommended professors” than any other institution. The idea that the appointment of Khalidi would affect its institutional character is absurd. Yet by politicizing Khalidi’s application, the warning to academia is effectively reissued: “take us seriously, or your campus is next!”

Whether Massad gets tenure or Khalidi the position at Princeton should depend only on their scholarly credentials, not their political views. The commissars’ efforts to politicize academia are eerily reminiscent of New Left campus activism in the 1960s and ‘70s. Indeed, in keeping with the development of neoconservatism more generally, many of those who now claim to struggle for conservative values against the “enemies of America” are the very same individuals that once waged campus campaigns against “U.S. imperialism.” The slogans may have changed but the lack of tolerance for those espousing different views is all too familiar. ■

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# On the Right Track

The conservative case for mass transit

By William S. Lind

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY famously wrote, "Yet there isn't a train I wouldn't take, no matter where it's going." If the Bush administration gets its way, there may soon be no trains for future Miss Millays to ride. The administration's proposed 2006 budget effectively kills Amtrak. In fact, the railroad may run out of cash before the end of fiscal 2005.

The recent brake problems of Amtrak's premier trains, the Acelas, which have taken them out of service until summer, are just the proverbial tip of the iceberg. At stake for the future are not only Amtrak's 25 million annual passengers but commuter agencies across the country. As the *Wall Street Journal* reported on March 16,

... whatever the specific outcome, one group likely to be affected is the 800,000-plus non-Amtrak passengers a day who rely on Amtrak to get to and from work.

Many passengers don't realize it, but commuter trains from California to Illinois to Pennsylvania depend on Amtrak tracks, facilities or personnel for all or part of their trips.

... "They talk about shutting Amtrak, but the hurt would be on the commuter side," says Dale Zehner, chief executive of Virginia Rail Express...

"So what?" some conservatives might say. "Why should we care about public transportation? We all have cars. We drive to work. Transit's for losers, and we're not losers."

Many people, not just conservatives, think of public transportation as a smoke-belching bus, filled with poor people, lumbering slowly through the inner city. That perception is out of date. If we look at those commuter trains, which often depend on Amtrak tracks, crews, and dispatching, we see that the people riding them are people like us, middle or upper-middle class professionals who have cars and could drive but find the train more efficient. Even a Mercedes isn't much fun when it's stuck in traffic, and unless you're a woman, you probably find it difficult to read a brief, type on your laptop, and drive all at the same time. (I know, I left out eating breakfast and putting your face on.)

Illinois's Metra commuter rail system, which is probably the best in the country, provides a good example. Metra serves a six-county area surrounding Chicago. Eleven percent of commuters in those six counties who have incomes over \$75,000 commute by train. So do 8.5 percent of those with incomes between \$50,000 and \$75,000. Each day, more than 60,000 people with incomes over \$35,000 ride commuter trains in the area that Metra serves. Many of those people are conservatives; most of the representatives they send to Congress are Republicans. There is a real conservative constituency for public transit, made up of conservatives who actually use transit.

The key to understanding this phenomenon—use of transit by people who have plenty of money, usually more than

one car and could drive (they are called "riders from choice")—is the difference between buses and rail transit. Few riders from choice will choose to ride a bus, but many will ride a train. Again, a couple of the counties Metra serves show the story. In DuPage County, more than 15 percent of commuters with incomes over \$75,000 take the train. In Lake County, the figure is 13 percent. In the same counties, less than one-tenth of one percent of people with incomes over \$75,000 ride the bus. In Lake County, the mean earnings of rail commuters are more than \$76,000; the figure for bus riders is less than \$14,000. In fact, the mean earnings of rail commuters are more than double those of people driving to work alone. (All figures are from 1990 census data.)

So why are many conservatives opposed to transit, especially rail transit? (One of the constant refrains of anti-transit conservatives, who are really mostly libertarians, is "Buses are better than trains.") The answer lies in three widespread perceptions, all of which are wrong. First, conservatives believe public transportation is a government creation. In a pure free market, virtually all public transit would vanish as subsidies, which go only to transit, not cars, are eliminated and people turn to an inherently superior mode of travel, the automobile. Second, no conservatives use public transportation. (We've already seen that is not true of commuter trains.) And finally, transit does not serve any important conservative goals.

Let us consider each of these in turn. Wisely, most conservatives believe in looking at history in order to understand the present. If we consider the history of the fight for market share between automobiles and public transit, we quickly learn that the current domination by the automobile is not a free-market outcome. Rather, it is the result of massive government intervention on the automobile's behalf.

As early as 1921, the first year for which data are available, government was pouring \$1.4 billion into highways. The cars on those highways were competing with public-transit systems, mostly electric railways, that were privately owned, received no government subsidies, and had to pay taxes. By 1940, the figure was \$2.7 billion. In the same year, the total operating costs of all transit systems except commuter rail were \$661 million—again, virtually all private money. After World War II, government intervention on behalf of highways soared. In 1950, it was \$4.6 billion. By 1960, the figure was \$11.5 billion. It was not until 1980 that government subsidies to transit could even be counted; in that year, they amounted to \$5.8 billion, but highways received \$39.7 billion. By 1990, government transit subsidies were up to \$14.5 billion, but the figure for highways was almost \$74 billion.

Nor is that all. Postwar building codes in effect required sprawl, which created suburbs that were difficult for rail transit to serve. Earlier suburbs had largely been created by electric railways, and were more compact.

The current imbalance between automobiles and transit is a classic product of government interference in the marketplace. Today, all modes of travel are subsidized, but cars are subsidized far more heavily than trains. Amtrak's whole annual federal subsidy, much of which also supports commuter trains, would not pay for more than a fraction

of a single major highway project such as Boston's leaky "Big Dig."

The second misperception, that no conservatives actually ride mass transit, we have already shown to be false by looking at the demographics of commuter-rail passengers. The same is true for light rail, which is the fastest-growing type of rail transit in the United States. St. Louis's MetroLink light-rail system has demographics similar to Chicago's commuter trains. According to a 1997 survey, only 27 percent of MetroLink's riders either did not drive or had no car available (for bus riders, the figure was 61 percent). Fifty-five percent of rail riders owned two or more cars. Sixty-two percent of rail passengers were white (only 32 percent of bus riders), and 32 percent had incomes over \$55,000, compared to only 8 percent of bus riders. Most of MetroLink's passengers were riders from choice; a 1995 survey found that 85 percent had

goals. One is economic development, especially redevelopment of urban areas. In one American city after another, new rail transit lines have brought massive new development. Why? Because rail transit represents high-quality transit, transit used by people with substantial disposable income, and because with its tracks and wires, it is a long-term promise of good transit service. Unlike a bus route, rail transit cannot get up and move overnight. Developers will only develop on the basis of an expectation of long-term return. Examples of the dramatic effects on development rail transit can bring are numerous. A recent one is Portland, Oregon, where a new streetcar line, a loop covering only a couple of miles, has already created over \$1 billion in new development. That development is the kind America's cities need most, redevelopment of the urban core rather than additional suburban sprawl.

THE IMBALANCE BETWEEN AUTOMOBILES AND TRANSIT IS A **CLASSIC PRODUCT OF GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE IN THE MARKETPLACE**. TODAY, ALL MODES OF TRAVEL ARE SUBSIDIZED, BUT **CARS ARE SUBSIDIZED FAR MORE HEAVILY THAN TRAINS**.

not previously used the bus. To the degree these demographics correlate with political outlook, it is safe to say that many, perhaps even a majority, of MetroLink's riders are conservatives.

Rail transit serves conservative commuters in another way. Because most commuters are traveling in rush hour, and most Americans drive to work alone, each rider from choice who takes rail transit represents almost one car removed from rush hour traffic. Those conservatives who still drive thus face less traffic congestion.

Finally, rail transit (but not buses) does serve some important conservative

Even this short survey illustrates a basic point too many Washington conservatives neglect: a strong case for rail transportation, urban and interurban, can be made in conservative terms. Sadly, in this case as in so many, officeholders and policy wonks alike are not really conservative. An America paved from sea to shining sea is fine with them. Come to think of it, I don't remember any trains in Brave New World. ■

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# Entangling Allegiances

The greatest challenge to American sovereignty comes not from global institutions but from a population that isn't putting down roots.

By Nicholas von Hoffman

SUPREME COURT Justice Anthony Kennedy has been taking whacks from conservatives who dislike his use of foreign legal opinions in a recent Supreme Court decision. Their objections are in accord with long held conservative principle.

For almost a century, conservatives have been beating back infringements on national sovereignty, be they in the form of the League of Nations or the United Nations. Although a few major figures of the Right like William Howard Taft have had moments of weakness on the subject, the greater number have stationed themselves on the ramparts guarding against any lessening of national independence.

The degree of success they have enjoyed depends on your politics but, overall, you would have to say they have kept America fairly clear of entanglements veering too close to world government. The U.S. stands stoutly outside the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction. It has successfully resisted pressure to limit its use of landmines or submit to international regulation of that which comes out of American tailpipes and smokestacks. It has told the UN where it can go when it comes to making war. Nonetheless, America is not the self-contained, sovereign, independent national state that it once was. *De jure* national sovereignty seems more or less as it was 100 years ago, but *de facto* the nation's freedom of action is curtailed, limited, and increasingly influenced by people outside its borders and by people inside working for outside goals.

In the realm of business, finance, and economics, Congress has lost the power unilaterally to tax, subsidize, and regulate. A significant slice of national sovereignty went out the window with membership in the World Trade Organization. Large American companies, dependent as much on business abroad as at home, cannot merge, acquire, or do a host of other things without the approval of foreign governments, most notably the EU. In the early years of the new century, we are no longer powerful enough to conduct our affairs on a like-it-or-lump-it basis.

Another kind of largely unnoticed vitiation of national sovereignty is transpiring from the bottom. This is the dual-nationality politics of both immigrant and native-born Americans. It takes many forms, but it adds up to the demise of the once unsailable rule that a nation's internal affairs were its business and nobody else's and you may not play politics across somebody else's borders. But the importance of what happens in elections both abroad and at home has led many people to ignore the rule that it's hands off when the election is taking place far from where they live or have citizenship.

Nowadays, for example, Mexican politicians campaign in California among their erstwhile and not so erstwhile fellow citizens for votes and money. We see figures like the Mexican journalist-politician Jorge Ramos taking part in the American political process. Ramos, a legal immigrant, says that he has not applied for U.S. citizenship since he is

considering running for public office in Mexico, but until he makes up his mind he will politick on this side of the border for legislation that people on the other side of the border want. And speaking of borders, if the overwhelmed and undermanned American authorities are unable to control who comes and goes in the face of what verges on border nullification, we can speculate that in the course of time some kind of novel political process, not envisioned in the constitutions of either country, may govern the Southwest.

Dual-national politics is not confined to Mexicans. Israeli politicians have been campaigning in America for years. Those Jewish Americans who are committed to the nation of Israel move back and forth between the politics of both nations with such ease that a political scientist might conclude that there is already an overlap in the political systems of the two societies.

Then there is the gusto with which Iraqi-Americans voted in the recent elections in Iraq, another indication that the old laws prohibiting the exercise of citizenship in another country seem to be a dead letter.

Until the late 19th century, anything that smelled of foreign intervention in American politics got smacked down. It is said that Grover Cleveland lost the 1888 election when the moronic English minister to the United States, Lord Sackville-West, was tricked into publicly endorsing Cleveland. Upper-class



American WASPs may have exhibited a love for and identification with the motherland, but those emotions were not shared by lower-class people of the same ancestry, who continued to hate the English in accordance with the traditions of the American Revolution. When upper-class Anglophiles co-operated with the English government in a successful campaign to bring the United States into World War I, it was the first large-scale foreign intervention in American political decision-making.

Rich Americans of Anglo-Saxon descent often visited Britain and lived there for extended periods, and so for the upper-class, WASP loyalty and identification were enhanced by frequent contact with the foreign country. But most of those who came and settled in America had neither the money nor the time to be flitting back to their former homelands for quickie visits and squirts of identity renewal. Once they had crossed the ocean, the ties were, if not broken, attenuated.

Cheap transportation changed that as can be seen with the coming of large numbers of Puerto Ricans whose homeland's commonwealth status made them what you might call semi-Americans on their arrival in New York. In short order, the island's politics and New York's were so thoroughly mixed that the city's politicians found it rewarding to go down to Vieques to get themselves arrested protesting the Navy's use of the place for target practice.

In due course Albanians, Arabs, Chinese, Indo-Chinese, Indians, Koreans, Cubans, Haitians, and a large assortment of Africans were coming and going, conflating their politics, their political aims, and their cultural norms with those they found after deplaning at JFK and LAX. In the new American cockpit of competing, ethnically-based policy claims, it is difficult to discern what is the American national interest.

To the extent that the present American public is one of divided loyalties and objectives, determining a common, national interest often involves interethnic political bloodletting, bringing distant conflicts to American shores. The Arab-Israeli dispute is example number one, but there are others, such as our foreign policy in regard to Castro and his Red island nation, which is crafted primarily by revanchist Cuban émigrés.

Communications are also playing their part, converting Negroes into African-Americans and creating, via back formation, a kind of metaphysical national identity. Fifty years ago, Negroes, as persons of color then wished to be called, would have nothing to do with Africa. For the most part it was seen as a backward place and a cause of embarrassment. In the space of a generation, the African-American created himself, forged an identity with a no longer dark continent, boasted of his lineage, and began dual-loyalty politics. American blacks, in

American political agents operating abroad seem to be more active than ever. The new government in the Republic of Georgia apparently was American-inspired and the Orange Revolution in the Ukraine appears to have been paid for by Washington or by various think tanks and foundations operating as American cat's paws. President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, are indefatigable in their efforts to instruct, guide, and manipulate politics around the globe.

Almost the entire Democratic brain trust from the last election was hard at work on behalf of Tony Blair and the Laborites in his effort to win a third national election. Up until now, former American presidents did not stump for the re-election of foreign politicians. That one went out the window the other day when Bill Clinton's smiling face turned up on a jumbotron at a British Labor Party rally. The scratchy, inspirational voice of the Arkansas traveler was heard exhorting the

## DETERMINING A **COMMON, NATIONAL INTEREST** OFTEN INVOLVES **INTERETHNIC POLITICAL BLOODLETING**, BRINGING DISTANT CONFLICTS TO **AMERICAN SHORES**.

some ways the oldest, the most quintessential and most American of Americans, have converted themselves into a virtual immigrant population. Today much of contemporary African-American politics looks like the politics of people who got here 30 years ago. A parallel but earlier development took place with some Italians and Germans who arrived in the United States before the birth of their national states.

Over the last half century, the American government has done its part to break down the taboo against playing politics in other people's countries. For decades the rationale for doing so was defeating Communism; that war was won almost a generation ago, though

assembled socialists with the news that, "We just need leadership, and Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and New Labor are providing that leadership. I'm just here to say thank you, amen and go get 'em!"

Whether or not these changes are eventually crystallized by institutional practice and legal recognition, gone forever is the rule that the domestic affairs of a nation, this one included, are nobody's business but its own. ■

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# Hooked on a Feeling

Nothing is of absolute value, but don't we feel great!

By Christina Hoff Sommers and Sally Satel

THE CRUSADE AGAINST games with winners and losers, the sensitivity monitoring of classroom textbooks, the antipathy to competition, are all part of a national effort to enhance the self-confidence of American children. Yet it has never been shown that "high self-esteem" is an essential trait.

High-school dropouts, shoplifters, burglars, car thieves, and even murderers are just as likely to have high self-esteem as Rhodes Scholars. As a 2001 article in the *Scientific American* pointed out, "Saddam Hussein is not known as a modest, cautious, self-doubting individual." Hopeful Americans continue to buy thousands of books each year with titles like *The Self-Esteem Companion* and *Hypnosis for Self-Confidence and Self-Esteem*. Still no one seems to know how to define it, how to measure it, or whether it can be taught. Now several studies suggest that inflated self-esteem may even be dangerous.

In May 2003, four psychologists published the first comprehensive review of the supposed benefits of self-esteem. Roy F. Baumeister of Case Western Reserve University and his colleagues looked at all the existing studies on self-esteem and found no significant connection between feelings of high self-worth and academic achievement, interpersonal relationships, or healthy lifestyles.

On the contrary, high self-regard is very often found in people who are narcissistic and have an inflated sense of popularity and likeability. Such self-aggrandizing beliefs, said the authors, exist "mainly in their own minds." Furthermore, those with exaggerated estimates of self-worth

often become hostile when others criticize or reject them. "People who have elevated or inflated views of themselves tend to alienate others," the authors concluded.

If high self-esteem does not improve academic performance, if it does not make people less likely to engage in self-destructive behavior, then why encourage it at all? The review article did find one significant advantage that seems, at first glance, highly attractive. People with high self-esteem are happier.

Baumeister and colleagues were careful to say that further research is needed to establish the positive link. Nor do researchers know precisely how to determine that someone is happy or in which direction the causal story goes. But suppose we were somehow able to establish that high self-esteem promotes happiness. What parent or teacher would not want to confer such felicity on a child? This finding alone would appear to justify the self-esteem movement. Or would it?

For one thing, what makes us happy matters greatly. As we already noted, bullies and sociopaths often score very high on self-esteem tests and claim that they are very happy.

Happiness, without a foundation in ethics, can characterize a smug, unfeeling person, and such people are often exploitive and dangerous. As John Stuart Mill famously said:

No intelligent human being would consent to be a fool, no instructed person would be an ignoramus, no person of feeling and conscience

would be selfish and base, even though they should be persuaded that the fool, the dunce, or the rascal is better satisfied with his lot than they are with theirs ... better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied.

Those who encourage children to "feel good about themselves" may be cheating them, unwittingly, out of becoming the kind of conscientious, humane, and enlightened persons Mill had in mind.

William James, a contemporary of Mill, noted that there is little or no connection between a man's self-esteem and his objective merits: "... a very meanly-conditioned man may abound in unfaltering conceit, and one whose success in life is secure and who is esteemed by all may remain diffident of his powers to the end."

What should schools be doing about self-esteem? They should not be addressing it directly at all. Self-esteem comes to some of us when we have an objective record of accomplishment in which we take pride. Even then, as the example of many other wonderful humble people teaches us, there is no guarantee it will come at all. If so, we must make do without it.

In his 1998 book, *The Myth of Self-Esteem*, John Hewitt points to the ethical hazards of using the classroom for therapeutic purposes. In a typical classroom self-esteem exercise, students complete sentences beginning "I love myself because ..." or "Yes, I love myself even though I sometimes ..." Hewitt explains that children interpret these

assignments as demands for self-revelation. They feel pressed to “correctly” complete the sentences in ways the teacher finds satisfactory.

Teaching children to moderate their emotions is helpful to them. Forcing them to obsess over feelings and to share them with others, on the other hand, is meddling. In one exercise, during roll call, children identify their current emotional state rather than saying “here.” Suppose some of the children have serious problems at home—a depressed mother or alcoholic father. Should they feel compelled to disclose their true feelings? Or, alternatively, to present a false picture of themselves?

The roll-call exercise was developed by “Self Science,” a program started in 1978 by education researchers in Hillsborough, California. In 1998, a second edition of the center’s curriculum was published, entitled *Self-Science: The Emotional Intelligence Curriculum*. The text, as befits a “scientific” treatise, is full of charts and graphs with names like “confluence models,” “sequence spirals,” and “affective education index.” One typical activity is the “Hot Potato Feeling Experiment.” Students toss a beanbag back and forth, and when they catch this “hot potato” they shout out their current emotion. Later, they answer these questions: how does it feel to say what you are feeling? How do you feel when you can’t say anything? Is there anything you would like to have said but censored instead? What?”

The participants have to promise to keep everything said in the sessions a secret. Parents are not allowed to be present. The authors of the curriculum are unfazed by student resistance. Opposition only proves the program is working:

Somewhere during all this, there is a point where members need to rebel and test. (This testing is called ‘storming’ in the group development

process of ‘forming, norming, storming, performing.’) Be listening for expressions of hostility ... it’s your clue that the process is working.

What would it take to persuade the scientists that their process isn’t working? Hostility could be regarded as a sign that students find the program absurd, tedious, intrusive, or just a waste of time. They may be “rebellious” because they resent the requirement that they must bare their feelings or suspect that their classmates will not respect the secrecy pledge. Those in the business of promoting self-esteem education need to consider the possibility that their pedagogy is based on a false assumption. They take it for granted that open, emotional self-expression is necessarily a good thing for children. But what if it is not?

In a report called “Is Repression Adaptive?” a team of psychologists studied a group of high-school students, dividing them into three types: repressors (those who suppress unsettling thoughts), sensitizers (those keenly aware of their emotional states), and intermediates. The students were then asked to evaluate themselves and others using these distinctions; so were their teachers. The repressors were rated as more successful academically and socially. “In their day-to-day behavior it may be good not to be so emotional,” said the researchers. “The moods of repressed people may be more balanced.”

Yet curricula are being radically transformed by the requirement that school materials should help children feel good about themselves. The state of California, for example, requires that all instructional materials used in its classrooms “contribute to a positive educational experience for all students.” It therefore subjects prospective textbooks to a “social content review” to determine whether or not they “promote

individual development and self-esteem” and “instill in each child a sense of pride in his or her heritage [and] develop a feeling of self-worth.” Because California is one of the largest markets in the country, textbook publishers marketing to other states tailor their books to its specifications.

What happens when social studies textbooks aim at boosting self-esteem and providing the student with a “positive experience?” Gilbert Sewall, director of the American Textbook Council, aptly sums up the effects: “Students and teachers alike are sedated by textbook happy talk.”

Publishers and educators now take great care to avoid giving the impression that the United States is in any way exceptional or superior to other societies; to single it out for praise could hurt the feelings of children born in other countries. According to the special logic of the sensitivity monitors, immigrant youth might feel diminished or marginalized by readings that extol American traditions. A fact-based history curriculum that highlights the founding doctrines, the great wars, and the traditional heroes of American history might valorize America at the expense of other nations and cultures.

There is in fact no evidence that immigrant children or their parents would feel insulted or diminished by reading texts praising the nation’s democratic tradition and its heroes. A study by Public Agenda finds that “parents of all demographic groups—white, black, or Hispanic, immigrant or U.S.-born—clearly and resoundingly want the schools to teach children the traditional ideals and stories of what it means to be an American.” Two-thirds of them feel strongly that schools should “teach kids to be patriotic and loyal toward the nation.”

In 1995, when the Department of Education released the results of its National History Assessment, Lewis Lapham,

editor of *Harper's*, spoke of the low scores as a "coroner's report." Students, he said, are in a "state of mortal danger." He noted, "More than 50 percent of all high school seniors were unaware of the Cold War. Nearly six in ten were bereft of even a primitive understanding of where America came from."

Students in the past may have been ignorant of the fine points of American history, but they carried around in their heads a crude outline of our national story. Their history textbooks showed them that they were part of a highly unusual culture of liberty, and they were acquainted with and took pride in the heroes of the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. That prideful perspective is fast becoming obsolete.

Stanford's William Damon has written about the adverse effects on young Americans:

Students are not learning much of what they need to know ... there's another problem that may be even closer to the heart of the matter. This has to do with the capacity for positive feelings towards one's society, with a sense of attachment, a sense of affiliation, a sense of love for noble purposes larger than oneself, and a sense of inspiration fostered by one's role as citizen ... since the time of the ancient Greeks, [this sentiment] has been known as patriotism.

Now the very mention of the word patriotism, says Damon, provokes an argument: "If you think it's hard to talk about morality and values in the schools, try talking about patriotism."

One effect of the ignorance and confusion is that many students are reluctant or unable to condemn atrocities committed by other cultures no matter how heinous. In many world-history classes, it is now the fashion to present all cultures as morally equivalent. In

one typical high school text, *American Odyssey: The United States in the Twentieth Century*, the Anasazi Indians are praised for their "egalitarian culture in which people functioned as equals." Students do not learn about recent evidence that strongly suggests that Anasazi "egalitarians" were cannibals. Such information is routinely suppressed in textbooks and classrooms because revealing it would be disrespectful of the Anasazi and because a discussion of cannibalism might distress some students. It would inevitably raise questions about the moral status of another society, possibly implying that our own modern society might be superior.

In California, the Department of Education explicitly requires that "when ethnic or cultural groups are portrayed, portrayals must not depict differences in customs or lifestyles as undesirable and must not reflect adversely on such differences." Connecticut requires that all classroom materials "present the rights, goals, and needs of all groups as worthwhile and authentic."

A doggedly uncritical attitude to cultures other than our own demands a great deal of forgiveness on the part of the student. Inevitably, it requires that they approach exotic cruelties in a spirit of tolerance. In a 2000 commencement address, the president of Wake Forest University, Dr. Thomas K. Hearn Jr., reported visiting a Wake Forest class whose students were "reluctant to denounce Hitler as a monster." One student defended Hitler as "a man of his own time. We cannot judge him by our different standards."

Today, such no-fault history is common in American classrooms. Robert Simon, a professor of philosophy at Hamilton College, finds increasing numbers of students telling him "they accept the reality of the Holocaust, but they believe themselves unable morally

to condemn it, or indeed to make any moral judgments whatsoever." Simon calls their moral paralysis and relativistic stance "absolutophobia."

Phobias that inhibit moral judgment have found their way into all subjects, including English classes. Professor Kay Haugaard, a creative writing teacher at Pasadena City College, wrote in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* about her class's reaction to Shirley Jackson's story "The Lottery." This story describes a village that holds an annual lottery which all are obliged to enter. Each year the loser of the lottery is stoned to death.

Haugaard's students did not condemn the villagers. Instead they strained to understand them, to defend them and, in the end, to exculpate them. Haugaard sought in vain to find even one student who would react with moral indignation to the villagers' grisly custom, but she failed. "At this point I gave up. No one in the whole class of more than 20 ostensibly intelligent individuals would go out on a limb and take a stand against human sacrifice."

Students equate adverse moral judgment with intolerance and insensitivity. And though some professors are dismayed by their students' no-fault ethic, few appear to be doing anything to discourage it. On the other hand, not a few endorse and foster just this kind of moral agnosticism.

In July 2002, Zogby International released the results of a poll on moral education on the American campus. In a survey of 400 randomly selected college seniors, Zogby found the overwhelming majority (97 percent) said that they expected to be ethical in their future undertakings. However, 73 percent said they had learned from their professors that "what is right and wrong depends on differences in individual values and cultural diversity."

Pluralism is an American tradition, but moral relativism is not. In the Decla-



ration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson asserts the universal right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. He does not add, "At least that is how many of us feel about it here."

To be sure, the idea of "moral truth"—to say nothing of self-evident moral truth—is controversial, indeed. The theoretical debate over the ultimate status of moral judgments goes back to the very beginnings of philosophy in ancient Greece, when Plato (a moral absolutist) first challenged the Sophists (the upstart relativists). However fascinating and contentious the philosophical debate may be, we do not have the luxury of waiting to see which side finally prevails before we teach our children about right and wrong and good and evil.

It is no great achievement for a teacher or textbook publisher to induce skepticism in American students about the truth or legitimacy of Jefferson's assertions. What they badly need to understand is how fortunate they are that the nation's founders had such unusual ideas about personal liberty and individual rights, and how blessed we are to live in a society that takes them as self-evident and incorporates them into its Constitution and strives to live by them.

Nobel Laureate author V.S. Naipaul is struck by the originality, power, and sheer beauty of America's founding ideals:

The pursuit of happiness is ... an elastic idea; it fits all men. ... So much is contained in it: the idea of the individual, responsibility, choice, the life of the intellect, the idea of vocation and perfectibility and achievement. It is an immense human idea. It cannot be reduced to a fixed system. It cannot generate fanaticism. But it is known to exist; and because of that, other more rigid systems in the end blow away.

Such confidence assumes a lot. In particular, it assumes that children today

### **Pentagon protégé Ahmad Chalabi, who lied about WMD and leaked U.S. intelligence to Iran, is back on top**

and has been congratulated by Condoleezza Rice over his appointment as Iraq's deputy prime minister and acting oil minister. Chalabi has brought his friends along with him. Arras Habib Karim, his chief of intelligence, who had fled to Tehran after an Iraqi judge issued an arrest warrant for him, has returned to Baghdad. The Iraqi Justice Ministry's file on Arras has mysteriously disappeared, and there is no longer any danger of him being arrested. Arras orchestrated the alleged Iraqi defectors to European and American intelligence services prior to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. The "defectors" routinely fabricated information about weapons of mass destruction programs. The U.S. intelligence community also believes that Arras is an Iranian intelligence agent working for the Iranian Ministry of Information and Security. He was the conduit for a number of classified U.S. government reports passed to Iranian intelligence, many of which were originally given to Chalabi by Pentagon officials without authorization.



### **The Chalabi connection is also a major element in the FBI investigation of AIPAC, which led to the recent indictment of Department of Defense analyst Larry Franklin.**

The bureau has determined that the recently disbanded Office of Special Plans, headed by Doug Feith, was the source for the leaks both to Israel and Iran. Several of Feith's dozen handpicked employees have reportedly been polygraphed in an attempt to trace the document trail. An FBI source also notes that a number of the staff working most closely with Feith do so without security clearances that have been issued in the normal fashion, i.e., after a background investigation and a vetting process. They have reportedly received godfathered clearances in which senior Defense Department officials intervene in the process to overrule FBI objections. Feith himself should never have received a clearance after having been fired from the National Security Council in 1982 over allegations that he passed classified material to Israel, but he was reportedly godfathered by Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz.



### **Recent Department of Defense assessments suggest that North Korea has mastered the technology of miniaturization and now has the theoretical capability to mount nuclear devices on its two- and three-stage missile systems.**

A three-stage missile with a nuclear device could hypothetically cover most of the continental U.S., while a two-stage missile would threaten the West Coast. The capability was revealed when DIA head Vice Admiral Lowell Jacoby answered a question from Hillary Clinton at a meeting of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Senator Clinton's question was planted by a U.S. government source that opposes the Bush administration's policy towards North Korea and wanted to call attention to the fact that the policy has been a failure. The independent nonpartisan International Crisis Group confirms that North Korea may have 10 nuclear weapons and is making technological advances both in the area of nuclear miniaturization and in advanced missile technology.

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are being educated to take pride in their country's way of life. But it ignores the effects of therapsism.

As long as misguided sensitivities are allowed to constrain how and what our children are taught, civic education in America will fall short of its mission. For too many young people, the fear of being judgmental, categorical, and insensitive is paralyzing and quite literally demoralizing.

After several decades of therapeutic relativism, many of our young people are unable to speak in support of the moral ideals that have made their way of life possible. Too many have been rendered incapable of standing up for the ideals that ground our constitutional democracy. Liberty? What of it? Some may not be sure whether our way of life is especially worth defending.

There are many who believe that therapsism in the schools is a benign, constructive influence that comforts children, calming their fears and enhancing their feelings of self-acceptance. The evidence, however, does not bear this out. On the contrary, the therapeutic regime pathologizes healthy young people. It encourages remedial measures for non-existent vulnerabilities, wastes students' time and impedes their academic and moral development. American students are, with few exceptions, mentally and emotionally sound. They are resilient. They can cope with dodgeball. ■

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*Christina Hoff Sommers is the author of The War Against Boys and Who Stole Feminism? Sally Satel, M.D., is author of PC, M.D.: How Political Correctness is Corrupting Medicine.*

*From the book One Nation Under Therapy: How the Helping Culture is Eroding Self-Reliance, available wherever books are sold. Copyright © 2005 by the authors. Reprinted with permission from St. Martin's Press, LLC.*

## PR Problems

Proportional representation corrupts democracy.

**By Jon Basil Utley**

MOST DEMOCRACIES in the Third World have not brought about great prosperity. Many are corrupt, dysfunctional, and in disarray, unable to control crime or perform the most basic functions of civil society.

As Washington promotes a constitution for Iraq and Arab rulers are pressed to reform, we would do well to analyze why some democracies work so much better than others.

The rules for economic development and effective government are proven and well known; what's less understood is why many societies are unable to adopt them. The failure is often blamed on their cultures or on corruption, but a common affliction is their political structures: nearly all have proportional representation (PR).

To understand PR, imagine if our Congress were composed of four parties, Democrats, Republicans, a traditionalist Old Right Party, and Greens, each of the last two with 5 percent of the seats. Also imagine that each party is run by the old men who had been around the longest, perhaps a Senator Byrd for one and Bob Dole for another. There would be little new thinking and close political disputes would often be decided by the swing votes—the Old Right and Greens. That system of government, with even more parties, afflicts most of Eastern Europe and Latin America. Any political party that can garner at least 5 percent of the vote would obtain representation in Congress.

It gets worse. Each party runs nationwide, and its candidates are determined

by lists controlled by each party's machinery—usually old-timers who are owed favors and remember grudges. The old men name themselves to the top of the list while the younger start at the bottom, if the bosses approve of them. If the party then wins 40 seats in Congress, the first 40 names on the list get selected. Old politicians like this system: they rarely lose office. Also, reformers—often seen as troublemakers—can be eliminated by simply keeping them off, or at the bottom, of the lists. Corruption is endemic and protected as voters can't throw out an individual representative. As long as their party gets at least 5 percent of the vote, the old-timers at the top of the list will always have seats in Congress and decide who else gets on the lists. In parliamentary governments, the winning alliance then votes for one of their old leaders to become prime minister.

In the American and English systems, each legislator represents a distinct geographical region. He can be voted out in the next election and new candidates can challenge a powerful incumbent. With proportional representation, those who represent the whole nation or large parts of it represent everybody and nobody. They can speak in generalities and are rarely called to account for specific votes, policies, or consequences.

Venezuela is a perfect example, all too typical of Latin America. From the '70s to the '90s, two old men, Carlos Andres Perez and Rafael Caldera, each won the presidency twice as voters had no other choice: in rejecting one, they got the other. In their desperation to get rid of

the corrupt, incompetent, statist, and paralyzed old parties, they voted for leftist ideologue Hugo Chavez, the current president. Vladimir Chelminski, former director of the Venezuela's Chamber of Commerce, described the situation in the *Wall Street Journal*:

For decades, the quality of life had been deteriorating. The democratic process seemed to function well only for the benefit of politicians and their friends. The political parties that had alternated in power since 1958, Social Democrats and Social Christians, were very much the same. Both offered socialism with political freedom. Their policies paid lip service to the poor but always proved counterproductive. Private property and contracts meant little in their laws. Two-thirds of willing workers could not find employment in the formal economy ...

Israel's government offers another example of nationwide proportional representation. A party can get seats in the Knesset if it wins just 1.5 percent of the nationwide popular vote, some 55,000 votes. The system gives crucial power to the religious parties, a determined minority that gains some 20 percent of the vote. As the swing bloc, which could go with the Labor or Likud to form a government, they have such great political power that they are exempt from military service. Many don't even have jobs or pay taxes.

There are a few nations doing fairly well with systems of PR, Slovakia and Spain, for example. But they are young democracies with young leaders. Their parliaments haven't yet atrophied into the paralysis of older PR governments. They are also ethnically homogeneous. Note, however, that the successful East Asian democracies (and India) do not use proportional representation, although some have a mixed system with 10 to 20

percent of their legislatures elected with PR. Russia's Duma is 50 percent PR, Mexico's is 40 percent. Chile is one of the very few Latin American nations not to use the system.

Ruth Richardson, former Finance Minister of New Zealand and an architect of that nation's free-market reform and prosperity in the early '90s, spoke at a conference last year in Moscow sponsored by Cato Institute. She argued that many nations "afflicted with proportional representation" had a low quality of public policy and great difficulty at legislating meaningful reforms. She cited much of Western Europe as an example. Except for England, it has been unable to reform its paralyzing labor laws and anti-entrepreneurial regulations.

Peru's great economist Hernando de Soto also focused on this problem in his classic book *The Other Path*, arguing that democracy works so much better in Anglo-Saxon nations because they do not use PR.

With this global civics lesson at its disposal, the United States still chose proportional representation for its Iraqi experiment in democratic transition. The system draws no electoral districts with distinct territorial representation such as the U.S. Congress, which gives a balancing power to smaller states and constituencies. Such a bicameral system as America has would help resolve the problem of protecting minorities such as the Kurds, Sunnis, and Christians in a Shia-majority population. The concern about terrorists preventing people from voting in Sunni areas would have been solved if there were precise geographical districts each entitled to a representative in the Congress. Then a low voter turnout would not have mattered. The people in the district would still have a representative.

European analyst Frank Glodek, in a letter to the *Central Europe Review*, May 2000, noted:

Proportional representation is particularly dangerous in any nation that has suffered from ethnic, ideological or religious divisions, virtually compelling people to vote along these pre-established lines, regardless of whether they know it to be destructive and of their preference to do otherwise. Not even a five percent vote threshold for a party to hold seats in parliament is a barrier to these voting patterns and their negative impact.

Why? When you have proportional representation, you must assume the 'others' will vote ethnically, putting you at risk. The only way to protect yourself is by doing the same...

A proportional representation system can never unite so many diverse nations and peoples effectively, as it is inherently and unavoidably biased toward extremism, instability, immoderation and ineffectiveness. ... People forget that the United States was, from the outset, a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country.

Dysfunctional democracies foster instability and misery in much of the world. They represent a threat to American interests and world prosperity. Although other cultural factors, such as how prime loyalties reside with family and tribe rather than nation, also play a critical role, Washington's efforts towards building prosperous, moderate governments in Iraq and the Arab world need to encourage systems which have proved successful elsewhere. ■

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# Arts & Letters

## FILM

[Crash]

### Crime and Prejudice

By Steve Sailer

ON LOS ANGELES'S Wilshire Boulevard in 1991, during the murderous crack era, two young black men shoved snub-nosed .38s in the faces of screenwriter Paul Haggis and his wife and carjacked their new Porsche. Out of that horrifying incident grew Haggis's strong directorial debut, the ensemble drama "Crash."

More than making up for the phoni-ness of his portrayal of women's boxing in "Million Dollar Baby," Haggis's "Crash" is perhaps the most honest movie yet about how America's racial patterns in crime generate corrosive, but sadly accurate, ethnic prejudices.

The press, though, doesn't consider crime victims to be real victims because they are just random human beings, not organized pressure groups. Most critics have misinterpreted "Crash," praising it, bizarrely, for supposedly discrediting the racial stereotypes it actually explains.

As two African-American men emerge from an expensive restaurant, one (played well by rapper Ludacris) entertainingly rants about how their waitress gave them poor service just because they are black. While his sidekick points out that she was black, too, they pass L.A.'s district attorney (Brendan Fraser) and his Brentwood socialite wife (Sandra Bullock). Although heavily Botoxed, she

visibly flinches at the sight of black guys just walking past her. This blatant racism enrages Ludacris, so he chooses the DA's Lincoln Navigator as tonight's vehicle to carjack.

Afterwards, the DA groans, "Why'd they have to be black?" Calculating that the news is going to cost him either the black vote or the "law-and-order vote," he immediately instructs his aides to find some black to promote publicly.

Meanwhile, a black LAPD detective (Don Cheadle of "Hotel Rwanda") is investigating a road-rage incident in which a white undercover policeman shot an out-of-control off-duty black cop. The DA's oily Irish-American fixer (character actor William Fichtner) lets Cheadle know the boss wants to prosecute the white cop to appease black voters, so he's not happy when Cheadle reveals the dead black officer had \$300,000 in his trunk. (This is based on a 1997 LAPD scandal.)

The politico blurts out his frustration at how the tidy deals he engineers are constantly undermined by black malfeasance. "Why do blacks get themselves thrown in prison eight times more often per capita than whites?" he demands of Cheadle, who has no answer. Cheadle finally agrees to frame the innocent white cop in exchange for a promotion and the dropping of felony charges against his younger brother, who turns out to be one of the carjackers.

Despite its admirable candor, "Crash" is not a realistic film. The immensity of L.A. means that Angelenos seldom run into other people they know by accident. Some Los Angeles screenwriters respond by crafting intricate coincidence-driven plots about a fantasy L.A. where everyone knows everyone else, as in Paul Thomas Anderson's "Magnolia" or Alex Cox's brilliant "Repo Man." Simi-

larly, "Crash" slams together the lives of about 16 Angelenos of every ethnic group (except, oddly enough, Jewish) in a chain reaction of racial conflicts.

Haggis imposes two more implausible but intensifying rules. Each character has clichéd qualities, both good and bad. The Irish cop, superbly portrayed by Matt Dillon resents blacks' affirmative-action privileges but risks his life to save a black woman he once abused. The immigrant Iranian shopkeeper is industrious yet also a touchy hothead. The Mexican locksmith is a good family man, while sporting alarming gang tattoos on his neck.

Finally, every character in "Crash" must bark out his innermost negative views about the race of every other character with whom he collides. In the opening scene, for example, an impolite Korean woman rear-ends the car driven by a Latino lady, who explains to her exactly what she (and everyone else in L.A.) thinks of Asian women drivers.

The mostly minority L.A. audience at my showing found this unlikely in-your-face frankness a hoot, an enjoyable holiday from the public politeness prevailing among Angelenos, whose social template was laid down long ago by upbeat Midwesterners.

Moreover, since 1992, when the LAPD, rather than be further condemned for brutality after Rodney King's beating, let a drunken mob run amok at Florence and Normandie, resulting in much of the city being burned down, law-abiding citizens have bought lots of guns for self-defense. And as Robert A. Heinlein pointed out, "An armed society is a polite society."

"Crash" is too contrived to be a great movie, but it's a contrivance of an unusually high order. ■

Rated R for language, sexual content, and some violence.



## BOOKS

[*Wilson's War: How Woodrow Wilson's Great Blunder Led to Hitler, Lenin, Stalin, and World War II*, Jim Powell, Crown Forum, 341 pages]

# Making the World Safe—Again

By Thomas E. Woods Jr.

THE STORY SOUNDS oddly familiar: a president surrounded by yes-men and convinced of his divine mission to remake the world involves his country in a war that has nothing to do with its genuine security interests. When the grandiose promises he once advanced on the war's behalf do not come to pass, he simply retreats into his own reality in which everything has worked out splendidly.

Yet instead of Iraq and WMD, this story involves Woodrow Wilson, Europe, and World War I. After years of enforcing a double standard consisting of denunciations of German submarine warfare but only the occasional criticism of Britain's illegal hunger blockade, Wilson took his country into war against Germany for what he insisted were the noblest of purposes rather than narrow considerations of national interest. Although the eventual peace treaty violated just about every one of Wilson's stated principles, the president crisscrossed America calling it "an enterprise of divine mercy" and the "incomparable consummation of the hopes of mankind." Wilson, wrote Sigmund Freud, "was rapidly nearing that psychic land from which few travelers return, the land in which facts are the products of wishes."

We often hear of the unintended consequences of government intervention into the economy. For example, attempts to lower the price of milk by means of price

controls will lead to shortages of milk. In *Wilson's War*, Jim Powell is at pains to demonstrate that foreign intervention, too, has its unintended consequences—hence his book's provocative subtitle.

Those consequences have much to do with the Treaty of Versailles that Germany was forced to sign in March 1919. Wilson had spoken of a "peace without victory," a settlement that would be just toward victor and vanquished alike. Here he was certain that the United States had a salutary role to play, since left to its own devices Europe would end its war with an unjust settlement that would merely sow the seeds for a future conflict. Ironically, of course, such a treaty was made possible by the very American intervention that Wilson believed could avert it. (Wilson neglected the example of the Congress of Vienna a century earlier, which without any American help brought forth a settlement that managed to avoid a continent-wide war until the Great War of 1914-18.)

Wilson's Fourteen Points, which outlined the principles he hoped would govern the settlement and the postwar world, pointed to just such a peace. But it was not to be: Wilson was bullied at the peace conference by vindictive European leaders who threatened to remain aloof from the president's pro-

posed League of Nations—the institution Wilson fervently believed would prevent future wars and which could justify the American sacrifice—if he did not consent to their violation of his principles. Why, Powell wonders, did Wilson think the treaty negotiations would go any other way?

The Fourteen Points' call for general disarmament, for example, gave way to the demand that only Germany was to disarm. The call for an impartial settlement of colonial claims translated in practice into stripping Germany of her colonies and distributing them among

the victors. And so the treaty went, all the way down to the so-called war-guilt clause, which assigned exclusive blame for the outbreak of the war to Germany and her allies. This would be the rationale behind the enormous reparations bill laid at Germany's feet two years later.

In recent months, Republican cheerleaders for war have begun selling t-shirts, directed at the "war never solved anything" Left, listing all the evils that war has supposedly eradicated. One of them is "fascism." It is true that in the 1940s war did smash fascism, though at the cost of empowering Soviet Communism and ushering in half a century of nuclear terror. More fundamentally, though, the t-shirt philosophers miss the point that fascism, far from being a spontaneous phenomenon that emerged out of nowhere, was itself a product of a previous war, namely World War I.

**FASCISM, FAR FROM BEING A SPONTANEOUS PHENOMENON THAT EMERGED OUT OF NOWHERE, WAS ITSELF A PRODUCT OF A PREVIOUS WAR, NAMELY WORLD WAR I.**

There are at least two senses in which this was the case. For one thing, the fascists were deeply impressed, even shaped, by the experience of the war and the massive material and ideological mobilizations it effected. The nationalism that was encouraged by the war, the collective efforts toward a common goal, the suppression of individual liberty, the subordination of private interests to public needs—fascists sought to

apply all of these features of wartime experience to the postwar organization of society. The fascists emerged from the war persuaded that the classical liberalism of the 19th century was dead and that the society of the future would be centrally directed: its social policy, its culture, its economy.

The more frequently discussed way in which fascism derived from World War I involves the Treaty of Versailles. That treaty was so egregiously at odds with the Fourteen Points, on the basis of which the Germans had surrendered in the first place, that it was practically

tailor-made for the extremism and hyper-patriotic politics of an Adolf Hitler. As readers doubtless know, Hitler exploited German bitterness at the treaty and after taking power in 1933 began openly flouting its terms.

In some cases, the treaty's poisoning effects on German political culture were less direct. The German hyperinflation of 1923, for example, in which it took 4.2 trillion marks to equal one American dollar, would not have occurred had it not been for the heavy reparations and the German government's subsequent attempts to inflate its way out of them. The resulting disorder and humiliation played a significant role in helping Hitler's party extend its influence.

The consequences of American intervention in the war were not confined to Germany; Powell suggests a number of ways in which they extended to Russia as well. The February Revolution of 1917 had seen a liberal Provisional Government assume power in place of the tsar. The new government's hold on the country was precarious. Wilson joined the Allies in pressuring and bribing the Provisional Government into staying in the war. It was the misery and dislocation brought about by Russian participation in the war that had made that government vulnerable in the first place. Had Wilson not cajoled Russia's Provisional Government into remaining in the fight, it might have withdrawn from the conflict and consolidated its position, thus depriving the Bolsheviks of perhaps the most rhetorically potent weapon in their arsenal of propaganda.

This is a debatable point, to be sure, since Russia's Provisional Government had promised from the start that it would engage in a more effective prosecution of the war than had the previous government, and Wilson's role in keeping Russia in the war was probably marginal. Powell concedes that pro-war elements in the Provisional Government may have won out even in the absence of Western threats, but adds that this virtually bankrupt government was especially susceptible to financial pressure.

But had it not been for American intervention, say Wilson boosters, Germany might have won the war. That is by no means a foregone conclusion, and it certainly seems unlikely that Germany would have been in so decisive a position as to be able to impose draconian peace terms on the West. Powell is not convinced that a German victory would have been catastrophic. Germany, he observes, would have had to confront the same problem of restless nationalities that had dogged Austria-Hungary and Russia. "The best the Germans might have hoped for would have been to annex Belgium and northwestern France, where much of World War I had been fought, as well as territories gained from Austria-Hungary and western Russia. ... If the Germans had won the war, they would have had a hard time holding their empire together because of all the rebellious nationalities—the same nationalities that figured in the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires. The most likely outcome of a German victory: costly civil wars ending in German collapse."

There were no angels among the principal protagonists in the war, Powell reminds us, and the claim that one side's cause could be equated with democracy is propaganda of the worst kind. Wilson's speech calling for war, Powell rightly observes, was filled with "glittering generalities," above all the president's claim that "the world must be made safe for democracy." Wilson "didn't explain how this was to be done by allying with the British Empire, which had colonies around the world; with France, which had colonies in Africa and Asia; and with Russia, which was ruled by a czar." Belgium, whose official neutrality was breached by the Germans at the outset of the war, was an appalling colonial power responsible for as many as eight million deaths in the Congo.

No matter which side Wilson chose, he would be lending support to morally dubious causes. "If Wilson backed the British, French, and Belgians, he would have enabled them to seek vengeance against the Germans and protect their

empires in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. If Wilson backed the Germans, he would have enabled them to build an empire and seek vengeance against their adversaries."

Wilsonian propaganda made the German government out to be a uniquely wicked autocracy. But although Germany was no libertarian paradise, neither was it a repository of lawlessness and iniquity. As historian Walter Lacquer writes:

Germany was certainly not a free country by West European or American standards but it is useful to recall from time to time that there are degrees of oppression. It was no cruel dictatorship; there was a constitution and there were laws which had to be observed by rulers as well as ruled. In comparison with the dictatorships that were to emerge in Europe after the war, Wilhelmian Germany was a permissive country to an almost bewildering degree. Political murders were unknown, as was arrest and trial without due process of law. The Emperor himself was openly criticized in the press ... and if an officer assaulted a civilian, as had happened in the little Alsatian town of Zabern, this became a *cause célèbre* all over Germany. Workers on strike were not shot, censorship was applied only in extreme cases of *lèse-majesté* and blasphemy, and it is doubtful whether justice could have been flagrantly perverted as in the Dreyfus case.

Powell concludes with a chapter on the lessons that Americans should draw from Wilsonianism and its disastrous legacy. Conservatives have been known to observe that while failed private firms go out of business, failed government programs are rewarded with higher budgets. As Jim Powell notes in this important book, the same appears to hold true for failed foreign policies. ■

*Thomas E. Woods Jr. is author most recently of How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization.*

[*God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*, Jim Wallis, Harper San Francisco, 416 pages]

[*Exodus: Why Americans Are Fleeing Liberal Churches For Conservative Christianity*, Dave Shiflett, Sentinel, 183 pages]

## Prophets on the Right—and Left

By Philip Jenkins

IT ALL BEGAN with a car rental that should never have happened. “Though the man had a fine car of his own, just that day, for no reason he could think of, he decided to rent a car for his trip. And that’s where I met him, at Avis. I was in despair about finding a building for my new church. And right there, that man spoke a word of prophecy to me. He told me the part of town where I would find the building, and he told me I would find it in April. And on the very last day of that April, I signed the lease.” To hear the story, prophecy was no rare event in the speaker’s life, any more than finding an interesting movie or hitting a series of green lights on the way to work.

The storyteller was a powerful black urban pastor, deeply charismatic, articulate, and nobody’s fool, and he was emanating total confidence in a highly interventionist God who would have been instantly recognizable to John Wesley and probably to St. Paul. By fortunate confidence—or was it coincidence?—I heard this story as I was reading Jim Wallis’s book *God’s Politics*, which has created a sensation among liberals still shell-shocked after the 2004 presidential election.

Wallis’s thesis is that American society and politics are as God-haunted today as they have ever been and that individuals like the pastor represent, if anything, the mainstream in American life. Yet despite our saturation in religious ways of

thought and speech, the mass media present a ludicrous image of active, passionate religion as the sole preserve of the white Right, of stereotyped evangelicals who count no day complete if they have not chipped away at the rights of women or deprived the widow and orphan of their inheritance. But as my pastor friend illustrates, religious and particularly evangelical rhetoric has historically been as prevalent on the liberal or radical side of American life as among conservatives. I doubt whether the reverend has many Republicans in his large congregation or indeed whether many of his followers have met a Republican recently.

It would take a truly blinkered historian to omit God from the history of America’s social movements past and present, from the struggles to abolish slavery and establish civil rights to the rise of feminism and organized labor. Apart from the obvious evangelical and millenarian fervor driving change, any worthwhile account of American history must take full measure of Catholic social activism and liberal Judaism. Social change and agitation have long been phrased in religious terms and commonly in prophetic imperatives. Wallis places himself firmly in this tradition, drawing on the incendiary denunciations of injustice that motivated the great Hebrew prophets from Amos onwards.

Wallis, a left-wing evangelical who edits the activist religious journal *Sojourners*, believes the Christian tradition is deeply hostile to many assumptions that today mark the conservative Right, especially in matters such as militarism, aggressive foreign policy, tough law-and-order attitudes, and economic individualism. As Wallis asserts, trying to excise references to the poor from the Bible leaves a meager text indeed. In his eyes, then, his own “Christian Left” is at least as logical a manifestation of the faith as social or political conservatism.

His analysis carries a practical message. Wallis tells his story to arouse liberals to return to explicitly religious justification for activism and relearn

God-talk. Since last November, Democrats have indeed realized their God Gap, as repeated polls indicated the power of moral values in mobilizing support for George W. Bush. Liberals have also finally grasped the scale of popular revulsion against the values pushed by the media, the empty quest for sexual hedonism and material goods. Expect Wallis’s prescriptions to have a powerful influence in 2008 and probably in the 2006 midterms.

Wallis is obviously correct in his basic premise. Religious thought and rhetoric certainly underlie America’s liberal and radical traditions, and Biblical texts can be interpreted to justify collectivist social programs. This does not mean, of course, that those represent the only possible interpretations, and Wallis’s Biblical exegesis leans heavily towards the militantly anti-supernatural readings that prevailed among liberal churchmen in the mid-20th century—and which more recent scholars take with several pillars full of salt. But even if Wallis is presenting a one-sided picture, he makes a plausible case.

It is far less obvious, though, that the Democratic Party today can deploy this kind of sentiment. We can easily imagine Hillary Clinton in 2008 invoking the prophets and the epistle of James and—who knows?—doing so with transparent sincerity. But appealing to “people of faith” will promptly and inevitably encounter the acid test of practical policy. If you want to see dogmatic certainty in operation, just ask Democratic Party leaders and financiers to yield an inch even on an issue as outrageous as partial-birth abortion. If such a proposal is made, particularly dressed in the language of religion, we can expect hardcore party activists to storm the sanctuary.

Deep-dyed blue activists might tolerate a little harmless God-talk so long as it is not meant to have any implications in this world. But only scratch the surface of the sky-blues, and we will encounter a rich vein of bilious anti-clericalism, that class-based contempt that imagines every pastor as Elmer Gantry, every believer as a budding recruit for

the Christian Taliban, and every Catholic as a mind-manacled helot of a pederastic priesthood. This tendency reached its apex at the party's 1992 convention, at which liberal and pro-labor Pennsylvania Gov. Bob Casey was excluded from the rostrum because of his opposition to abortion, while feminists handed out badges caricaturing Casey in papal robes. There is no evidence that such rancor has dispersed. A hypothetical Democratic "candidate of faith" would constantly have to back-track to secure his or her base and would be left trying to explain the gap between words and actions without looking like a slithery hypocrite.

If Dave Shiflett is right, the gap between popular religiosity and media skepticism might be about to grow much wider. Shiflett, a journalist, is best known for his effective apologetic work *Christianity on Trial*, which rebuts all the standard arguments and myths directed against the faith. In his new book, *Exodus*, he describes the massive shift in the structure of American churches in recent decades as politically and theologically liberal movements have shrunk, or indeed collapsed, while conservative movements have flourished. The classic illustrations of this process would be, on the liberal and gay-friendly side, the Episcopal Church, its numbers down by some 30 percent over the past 40 years, and on the other hand the Assemblies of God, up 400 percent in the same period. The Assemblies, of course—John Ashcroft's denomination—are Bible-believing Pentecostals with a powerful faith in healing and prophecy.

Shiflett analyzes these changes in a highly readable and mainly anecdotal study, which draws on interviews with colorful figures like Fr. John McCloskey of Opus Dei, who "has a very pleasant speaking voice and appears to write with a razor blade." Shiflett offers many memorable individuals and conflicts and even, incredibly, succeeds in finding new horror stories about the Episcopal Church. It is stunning, for instance, to find Episcopal liberals invoking wild conspiracy theories to

explain why conservative Christians around the world don't like their recent actions. Like domestic opposition to Bill Clinton in the 1990s, apparently the robust orthodoxy of African and Asian Christians must be seen as a vast right-wing conspiracy funded by the Scaife family. The possibility that bishops in the global South have actually read the Bible and take it seriously seems not to have occurred to the liberal critics interviewed by Shiflett.

Readers may need reassurance that his portraits of liberal circles are accurate; sadly, they are. There really are theologians who visualize a God who "does not know the future. He has ideals for the future, and he tries to lure us to actualize those ideals"—God as Oprah, in fact.

Shiflett's main success stories are theologically conservative groups like the Southern Baptists, varieties of the Orthodox, and conservative Catholics. Beyond doubt, Shiflett is on to something here, especially when he directs

and liberal as mainstream Jews. As Wallis reminds us, someone can hold conservative or indeed reactionary views about spirituality yet adopt a strongly Left-liberal political ideology.

Moreover, that liberal churches exist at all today indicates that the drift to tradition is not a one-way movement. Through history, back-to-basics movements have repeatedly occurred during revivals and upsurges of faith, and the liberal churches of the day have been gravely weakened; yet new generations would later arise. The situation recalls the churches in the former Soviet Union, which were notoriously filled by frail old women. What would befall, observers asked, when those old women went to their reward? Why, replied the Orthodox leaders, we have new generations of old women already in training. The equivalent process in institutional life is a cycle of liberalization, reaction, and reform: Anglicans spawned insurgent Methodists, who liberalized in their turn and birthed the Holiness movement. Conservative

## CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIANS MIGHT BE ASCENDANT NOW—BUT WAIT A GENERATION OR TWO FOR THOSE DENOMINATIONS TO LIBERALIZE AND FRACTURE IN THEIR TURN.

his attention to the global South, where conservative and charismatic churches are booming spectacularly. As the West receives more immigrants from those regions, the balance will surely tilt still further towards theological conservatism, especially in the United States. Not surprisingly, this sea change has occurred beneath the radar systems of the highly secular major media.

*Exodus* is a thoughtful analysis of an important religious trend. And yet, before consigning the liberals to the dinosaur bone-beds of history, some qualifications must be made, especially about the terms "conservative" and "traditionalist." Conservative about what? And which traditions? As every political observer knows, Latinos in the U.S. might be very traditionalist about the church, the Eucharist, and the veneration of Mary, but they still vote as Left

Christians might be ascendant now—but wait a generation or two for those denominations to liberalize and fracture in their turn.

Though Wallis and Shiflett locate themselves very differently according to their political allegiances, their books both point to the continuing force of religion in shaping American life—and specifically supernaturally-oriented religion, prophetic or millenarian in nature. Each in its way makes nonsense of the familiar stereotype of the "Christian Right," either as a defining manifestation of American religion or as a purely political and demagogic phenomenon. ■

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[*The Woman and the Dynamo: Isabel Paterson and the Idea of America*, Stephen Cox, Transaction Publishers, 418 pages]

## A Barracuda Among Butterflies

By Justin Raimondo

THE REDISCOVERY of the Old Right in American politics—those who fought the New Deal and resisted Franklin Delano Roosevelt's relentless drive to drag us into another world war—has brought forth a rich harvest of books: reissues of the works of many of its principal figures, such as Garet Garrett and John T. Flynn, as well as biographies of Flynn, Rose Wilder Lane, and now Isabel Paterson. Stephen Cox brings this feisty, acerbic character to life in a way that had me laughing out loud at her idiosyncratic wit and left me wishing I could step back in time and make her acquaintance.

Paterson was born in 1886, a Canadian subject, on Manitoulin Island, the daughter of a feckless wanderer and his long-suffering wife. She taught herself to read at age three and by 1910 had already worked for Canadian politician R.B. Bennett, acquired and quickly ditched a husband, broken into journalism, started writing historical novels, and worked her way to San Francisco. By 1920, she was in New York, where she walked into the offices of the *New York Tribune* and asked for a job. Such was Paterson's formidable mien and persistence that Burton Rascoe, the editor, confessed, "I was afraid not to hire her." In 1924, the newly merged *New York Herald-Tribune* came out with its literary supplement, the first edition of which carried Paterson's soon-to-be-famous "Turns With a Bookworm" column—a lighthouse of reason that would continue to illuminate the rocky shoals of American literature and politics for the next 25 years.

Rascoe said that she had a "Thack-

eray drawing-room air about her—when silent, at ten feet away." Poet Elinor Wylie described her as "a woman of singularly pointed and ironical speech," and another contemporary characterized her wit as "so searing that no rubber plant ever grows again in a room through which she has trod." Quarrelsome, sardonic, and often biting sarcasm, her humor skewered many a pretentious phony. She moved through literary salons and teas—the natural environment of the literary critic—like a barracuda among the butterflies, snapping up a tasty tidbit here and there, while swarms of intellectual minnows fled scurrying in her wake. She gave writers "a fair shake," says Cox, "but it could be a very rough shake."

She roughed up Upton Sinclair, the socialist novelist and agitator, on more than one occasion, noting his good reviews in the Communist party's literary magazine: "The meanest remark in the *New Masses* is about Upton Sinclair's new book, 'Mountain City.' 'Style and content are one.' We kind of thought so, but felt it would be harsh to say it."

Paterson's libertarian credo was dramatized in her 1924 novel, *The Singing Season*, set in 14th-century Spain, in a scene where the king of Castile reproaches a merchant for disdaining the knightly virtues. The merchant's reply encapsulates her view of economics as the source of the vital energy that keeps civilization going. Commerce is the lifeblood of human society, he explains, and enables another—higher and more effective—sort of conquest: "Keep the roads open, the ports clear; make of Castile a safe haven for the merchants of all nations, and your neighbor states will ask for shelter under your protecting hand. It is better to make than take."

Paterson's stance was in sharp contrast to the fashionably progressive vision of social planning ushered in by World War I. That bloody conflict, which leveled Europe and with it the *laissez-faire* tradition of classical liberalism, sickened Paterson and poisoned the intellectual wells with collectivist ideolo-

gies of the Left and the Right. She stood like a rock against these threatening currents, lashing out at Reds and brown-shirts alike. In 1932, she summed up the American historical record since the Great War with admirable succinctness:

The uplifters got their way, [and] immediately wished conscription upon us. Then the demand for a 'business administration' was heard, and look at the darned thing now. After having boasted how well they could run the country, the bankers and business men are asking the government to rescue them from what they did to it. And meantime the internationalists set about saving the world, and what a swell job they did! And the moral legislators sewed us up in a sack with prohibition.

Disdain for uplifters who would run every aspect of our lives was the political expression of Paterson's radically individualist soul and the credo of a small but vocal band of writers and political figures who stood up against the galloping regimentation that was the spirit of the age. This was the platform of the Old Right—a term that the author of this volume treats with a degree of skepticism largely unwarranted. Cox rightly associates the "Old Right" label with the writings and influence of the libertarian economist and philosopher Murray Rothbard and his followers, but warns that they can get away with this appellation only by giving their criteria "the broadest possible interpretation." The "theory of the Old Right has the virtue of directing attention to important figures in American history," Cox concedes, "some of them unjustly neglected. But disliking the New Deal is not the same as advocating libertarian principles."

Cox cavils at the inclusion of such "veteran enemies of laissez-faire" as Sen. Burton K. Wheeler under the Old Right rubric, averring that what they had in common was "little more than opposition to President Roosevelt's conduct of foreign relations." Such a capacity for understatement is baffling in this instance, when what Cox is talking about

is the onset of a cataclysmic global conflict in which millions would perish and very nearly the memory of limited, constitutional government along with them.

There is a lot of material about the relationship between Paterson and Ayn Rand, author of *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*: they knew each other when Rand was an unknown and Paterson was the one with the influence. The two were great friends, with Paterson in the role of teacher, imparting libertarian political principles as they applied to the American scene to the Russian-born Rand. They collaborated on an idea of Rand's, the formation of an organization that would fight the collectivist paradigm and advance an alternative vision of economic and personal liberty. But the project never got off the ground. Here Cox refutes his contention that the Old Right is largely illusory.

The chapter on "War and the Intellectuals" portrays Paterson's dread of the coming conflict and her desperate hope to avoid it. She was not a pacifist; a war for self-defense was justified, but "the idea that America must plan for its own supposedly global mission filled her with

tion, yet her views reflected those of the Old Rightists of her generation—that we would defeat national socialism in the trenches and witness its triumph on the home front. The intellectuals of the Left, who were now hysterical in their denunciations of anti-interventionists as stooges of Hitler and the Mikado, were themselves stooges who would "join practically any group which begins by denouncing Fascism or Nazism. On such premises the joiner will soon find himself committed to 'leadership' demanding—we quote Miss Dorothy Thompson—'for President Roosevelt the power and the authority completely to organize the economic and moral strength of the country' on 'a total war footing.' What more did Hitler ever ask? What more is there to ask? Nothing."

There is much here that resonates in our own day and age. As a gaggle of ex-Trotskyists, ex-Black Panther groupies, and ex-liberals of the Scoop Jackson persuasion presume to take over the leadership of the conservative movement, we would do well to recall Paterson's advice to the repentant Marxists of her day, whose disillusion produced a number of

Freedoms as really two—freedom of speech and of religion—while "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" were dangerous illusions. Human beings will never stop wanting, no matter how much they have, and "freedom from fear" is only possible given "courage or rigor mortis." If our government was really intent on securing these "rights" for its citizens, they would only get "freedom from soap, freedom from shoes, freedom from food."

The war destroyed the last remnants of the world Paterson had lived in. It was a new age of liberal collectivism in which the ideas of individual liberty and responsibility so ably and charmingly championed by Paterson were not even considered quaint—but were banished entirely from any consideration. Before this dark age descended, however, Paterson launched a volley of intellectual fireworks that would light up the sky for years after her death, a signal to future generations of liberty-lovers that not all hope had been extinguished. Her book *The God of the Machine*, published in 1943, is a thoroughgoing defense of *laissez-faire* capitalism and a good many other things besides; here I can only give a general overview of its overarching theme that the material well-being of mankind depends on the unobstructed flow of energy—creative energy—through socio-political structures. Blockage, in the form of government regulation, leads to stagnation.

Paterson retired from the *Herald-Tribune*—or was fired, depending on how you look at it—in 1949, just as the liberal-collectivist consensus was fastening its grip on the American consciousness. She lived out her last years watching the old America she had loved bloat up into a collectivist colossus. The Paterson persona was summed up by one of her closest friends, who remarked, "I never could argue with Pat. I could only enjoy her." That her life and work are now being recalled in this fascinating biography is a sign that she may yet have the last word. ■

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## SHE WAS NOT A PACIFIST, BUT THE IDEA THAT AMERICA MUST PLAN FOR ITS OWN SUPPOSEDLY GLOBAL MISSION FILLED HER WITH TREPIDATION.

trepidation," writes Cox. "If no one could know enough to plan America's future, it was certain that no American could know enough to plan the future of the world." While the War Party disdained the America Firsters as relics of a bygone age when America was isolated, Paterson reminded them "that when it was founded the United States had Europe in the back yard and on both sides—French sovereignty in Louisiana, Spain to the South, and British troops garrisoned in Canada. It had had one European war fought on American soil—the French and Indian war, and George Washington fought in it. He couldn't have felt so nearly as 'isolated' as he would have wished."

Cox emphasizes the libertarian purity of Paterson's position on the war ques-

books which Paterson reviewed and praised, albeit with one important caveat. Such people had to be told, "The fact that you have lately given up work on your perpetual-motion machine is no strong recommendation of your new project for squaring the circle."

After Pearl Harbor, Paterson and her fellow anti-interventionists hunkered down. Many writers with her views were being turned out of the nation's editorial offices, but Paterson avoided the purge, if just barely. She could not restrain herself, however, when it came to conscription, which she denounced as a barbaric atavism characteristic of the totalitarian states. She also reminded her readers that the Soviet Union had been allied to Nazi Germany and ridiculed FDR's Four

# History in Bad Feith



If you think comedy is dead, you should have read a recent Letter from Washington by one Jeffrey Goldberg in the *New Yorker* about our old friend

Douglas Feith. Although Goldberg was trying to “make nice,” Feith emerges as a smiling wallet-lifter, insufferably arrogant, bogus, and very economical with historical truth.

Feith is described as a top policy advisor to Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz who “help[ed] build the intellectual framework for the Bush Administration’s campaign against terror.” All I can say is the next time Bush is looking for advice against terror, he should perhaps try any cop, fireman, or soldier. At least he’d get a straight answer. Feith not only deceived the White House, he also mislead Congress and everyone involved with countering terror. In most democratic countries, someone like Feith would have been prosecuted by now, just as Wolfowitz would have and probably Donald Rumsfeld. But not in this administration.

Personally, I would prosecute the bum for claiming Edmund Burke as his intellectual mentor. Burke believed in wisdom and stability, not some abstract notion of democracy reforming the world. Goldberg describes Feith’s library with its 5,000 books in the manner Paris Hilton’s publicity flack details la Hilton’s evening-dress closet. Busts of Washington, Lincoln, and Churchill abound. Here is a man with *gravitas*, “schooling himself in the schemes and follies of the British on the playing fields of the Middle East.” Having seen the results, this man has obviously been playing hooky. Or maybe he don’t read so good.

Feith proclaims, as neocons have been doing for decades, that wars are caused by appeasers and that it is tough guys like him who deliver peace by doing the unpopular thing and standing

up to dictators. “Baldwin was considered the most successful politician of his day,” Feith declares. “But the only people who have heard of him today see him as a jerk.” Well, that’s news to me, but then I’m not a neocon, nor am I among the few who have never heard of Stanley Baldwin. I am among the many who see Baldwin as anything but a jerk.

According to Feith, Baldwin “dithered while Germany re-armed. Like Neville Chamberlain, Baldwin did not understand the nature of the Nazi enemy.” This is pure you-know-what. Sixty years on, it is very easy to distort history, and no one is better at it than Douglas Feith. There is no evidence whatsoever that either Baldwin or Chamberlain failed to understand Hitler. They both detested him but, as responsible statesmen, sought to avoid another terrible war

tainly not worth Britain and France and Germany fighting a war over.

Feith’s arrogance is never more obvious than when Goldberg asks Feith about the dead and wounded on both sides in Iraq. “Based on what?” asks the great warrior-scholar, as if swatting flies. And it gets worse. Feith’s main informant was Ahmad Chalabi, a convicted fraudster who took the United States government and most of its intelligence services for a ride unequalled in history. Chalabi’s chief sponsor was Richard Perle, a man as intellectually honest as the crook he sponsored, and probably just as traitorous.

Despite his 5,000 books and predilection for British Arabists like Lawrence and John Glubb, here’s a bit of History 101 for the great warrior-scholar. “What’s the answer to Pearl Harbor, what’s the answer to the Holocaust? The surprising thing is not that there are so many Jews who are neocons but that there are so many who are not,” says the sofa samurai. Wrong again. It was during the years

**FEITH PROCLAIMS, AS NEOCONS HAVE BEEN DOING FOR DECADES, THAT WARS ARE CAUSED BY APPEASERS AND THAT IT IS TOUGH GUYS LIKE HIM WHO DELIVER PEACE BY DOING THE UNPOPULAR THING AND STANDING UP TO DICTATORS.**

with Germany less than 20 years after the end of the last one. Since Hitler had no quarrel with the British Empire but sought instead to redraw Germany’s eastern borders so as to bring German minorities living in the newly created East European states under the jurisdiction of the German Reich, it was entirely reasonable for Britain to avoid going to war over an issue in which it had no stake. Should the Sudetenland belong to Germany or to Czechoslovakia? Since the latter had only existed for 20 years, its claims were not terribly strong, cer-

of much derided “appeasement” that many Jews escaped Hitler’s wrath. After Britain and France entered the war, Hitler was bound to attack the Soviet Union so as to eliminate a potential ally of Britain’s. The massive Jewish population of the Soviet Union was then the front line of fire: 50 million people were to die. Jews were not rescued, Eastern Europe wasn’t saved, Stalin wasn’t toppled, and the British and French lost their empires. Appeasement doesn’t seem like such a bad policy, after all. Back to school, Feith. ■

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